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MAY 1967

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-THREE, NUMBER FIVE

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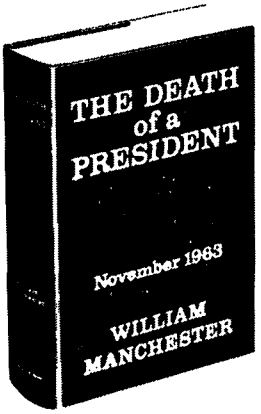

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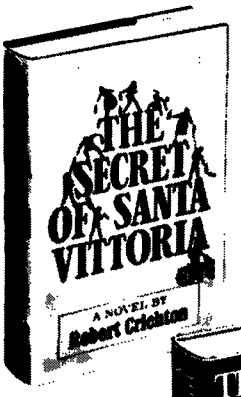

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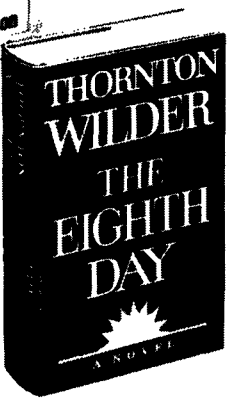

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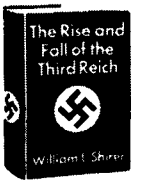

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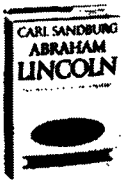

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Commentary

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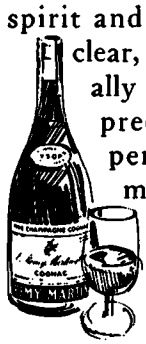

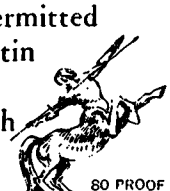

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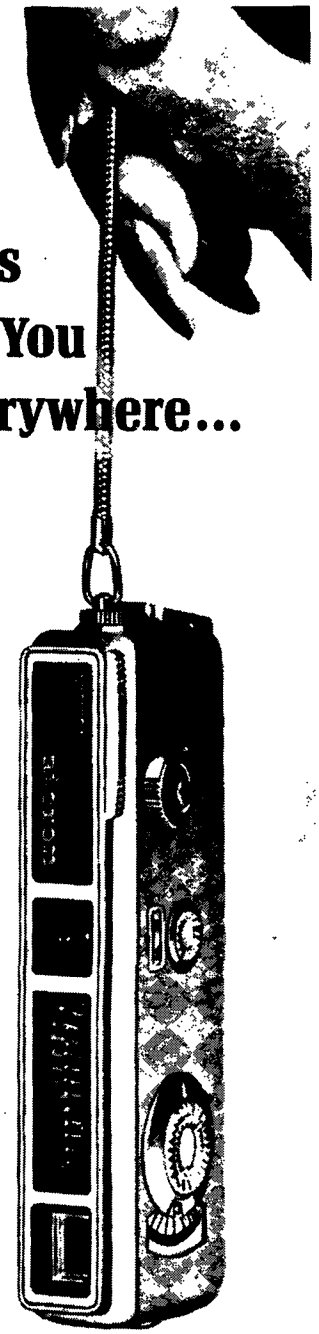

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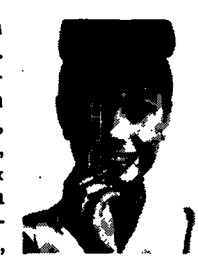

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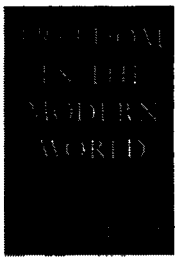

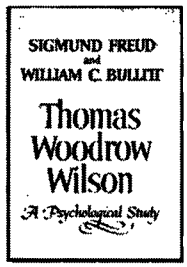

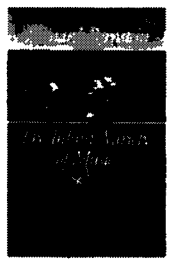

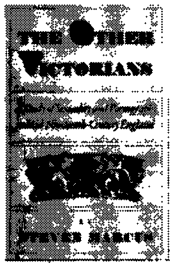

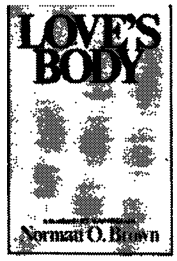

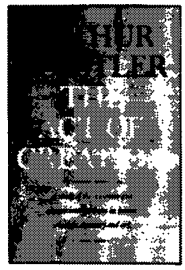

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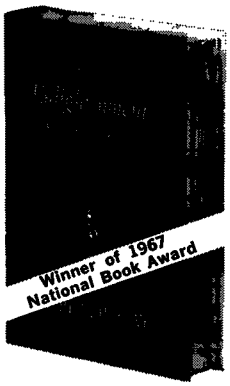

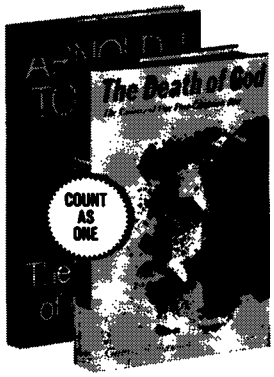

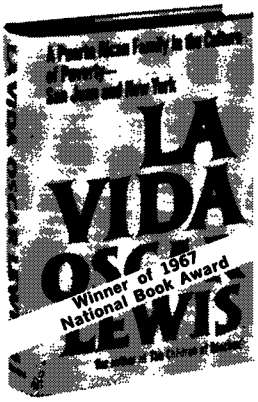

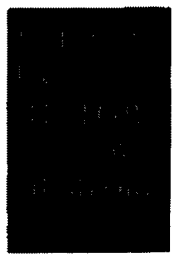

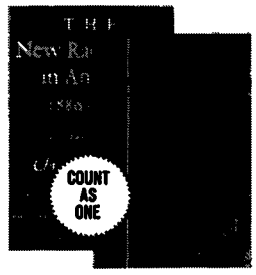

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U.S. Policy in Vietnam

To the Editor of Commentary:

Theodore Draper's "The American Crisis" [January] is the most trenchant criticism of America's Vietnam policy yet; but in so comprehensive a piece, it is too bad he did not suggest how—if we were to pull out—we might protect the South Vietnamese who had collaborated with us. He indicates that the North Vietnamese are inclined to liquidate any indigenous opposition.

Mr. Draper also fails to consider at least the possibility that the successful defeat of the Communists in Indonesia might never have occurred or been attempted if Vietnam were all Communist and no American intervention had taken place. His article is so very good that I hope he will trouble to comment on these points.

Edward T. Chase
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Theoore Draper's article is a remarkable description of our universal pattern of dealing with revolutionary social change in foreign countries considered to be inimical to our national security and international power position. I only wish Mr. Draper had gone one step further and asked why this pattern exists. What is it about America that seemingly drives it to engage in Holy Wars to defend its vision of freedom and democracy, and in the pursuit of such wars to support a variety of mandarins—Latin American, Southeast Asian, and even European—whom it would not long tolerate in domestic affairs? Why does America constantly need foreign scapegoats like Castro, Mao Tse-tung, and Ho Chi Minh, and an absurdly exaggerated theory of Communist world conspiracy in order to deal with puny threats to its national and international interests?

If, as Mr. Draper suggests, different administrations think in much the same way about the fundamentals of American foreign policy, and if different Presidents find it very easy to develop domestic political support for the warlike pattern he describes, then Vietnam cannot be blamed on President Johnson, Dean Rusk, or the Pentagon. One must ask instead what there is about American domestic politics, and hence in American society and culture, that encourages the country's political leaders to act as they do.

Is the pattern Mr. Draper outlines an inevitable consequence of American capitalism, as both the old and the New Left claim? Or is it rather a result of American affluence, which makes us unable to understand the political dynamics of poverty-stricken developing countries, and leads us almost inevitably to support the affluent elite of these countries?

Is the pattern perhaps a heritage of American class, ethnic, and racial conflict, which justifies the use of force to suppress rising lower-class populations, particularly non-white ones? Or could it be a modern form of America's religious tradition, which drives us to convert the world—as our missionaries once sought to convert the natives—to our economic and political philosophy by whatever means are necessary?

Might the pattern reflect some deep-seated and widespread insecurity in American society, which requires the existence of foreign scapegoats, warmaking, and victory at any price? Or is it a result of the undue congressional power of Southern and Midwestern isolationists who believe that declaring war on the worldwide revolution of rising expectations best minimizes long-run American intervention?

Finally, can the pattern be simply the reaction of the most powerful nation in the world, which, being already most powerful, can only lose power in the future, and must therefore continually over-defend itself against all threats, real and imagined?

I do not know the answers, but I think it is time that we begin to ask such basically sociological and socio-psychological questions of ourselves and our political leaders.

Herbert J. Gans
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Theodore Draper's seems to me a fair, thorough, and sobering analysis of the American role in Vietnam. I doubt if it would have weakened his thesis to discuss (1) Hanoi's reactions to American attempts to arrange negotiations and (2) the possibilities of a viable, representative government evolving from the Constituent Assembly. I, for one, as a former Fulbright lecturer at Saigon University, would welcome his comments on these points in order to be convinced of Mr. Draper's objectivity.

David Cooper
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Though a careful and solid piece of work, Theodore Draper's "The American Crisis" is fatally flawed by the identification of historical with political analysis. Historiography, unlike political analysis, is genetic: nothing whatever follows from it about decisions that should be made, and very little about decisions that can or will be made. Political decisions require analysis not of past mistakes and opportunities, but of the future effects of actually present alternative policies. Alternative past policies, proposed *a posteriori,* are but diversion—and so is most of Mr. Draper's essay; brilliant though it is, it is irrelevant to the policies he (or anyone else) proposes.

Mr. Draper himself strikingly, if unwittingly, illustrates my point. He explains why our military intervention in the Dominican Republic was historically unjustified since it was based on our past mistakes, and on false, biased information. Grant this, and what follows? Only that historical analysis, however correct, is irrelevant to the effect of political decisions—which alone justifies them. For the intervention, mistaken perhaps in origin, was quite successful in effect. . . . The Dominican Republic now has a popularly elected government which is stable, friendly to the United States, and reasonably effective in doing what Dominicans voted for. I do not think that if we had followed Mr. Draper's counsel—no matter how correct the analysis from which it sprang—as desirable a result would have been produced.

Mr. Draper's magisterial analysis of the history of our Vietnam policies is equally irrelevant: neither his own nor any other pol-

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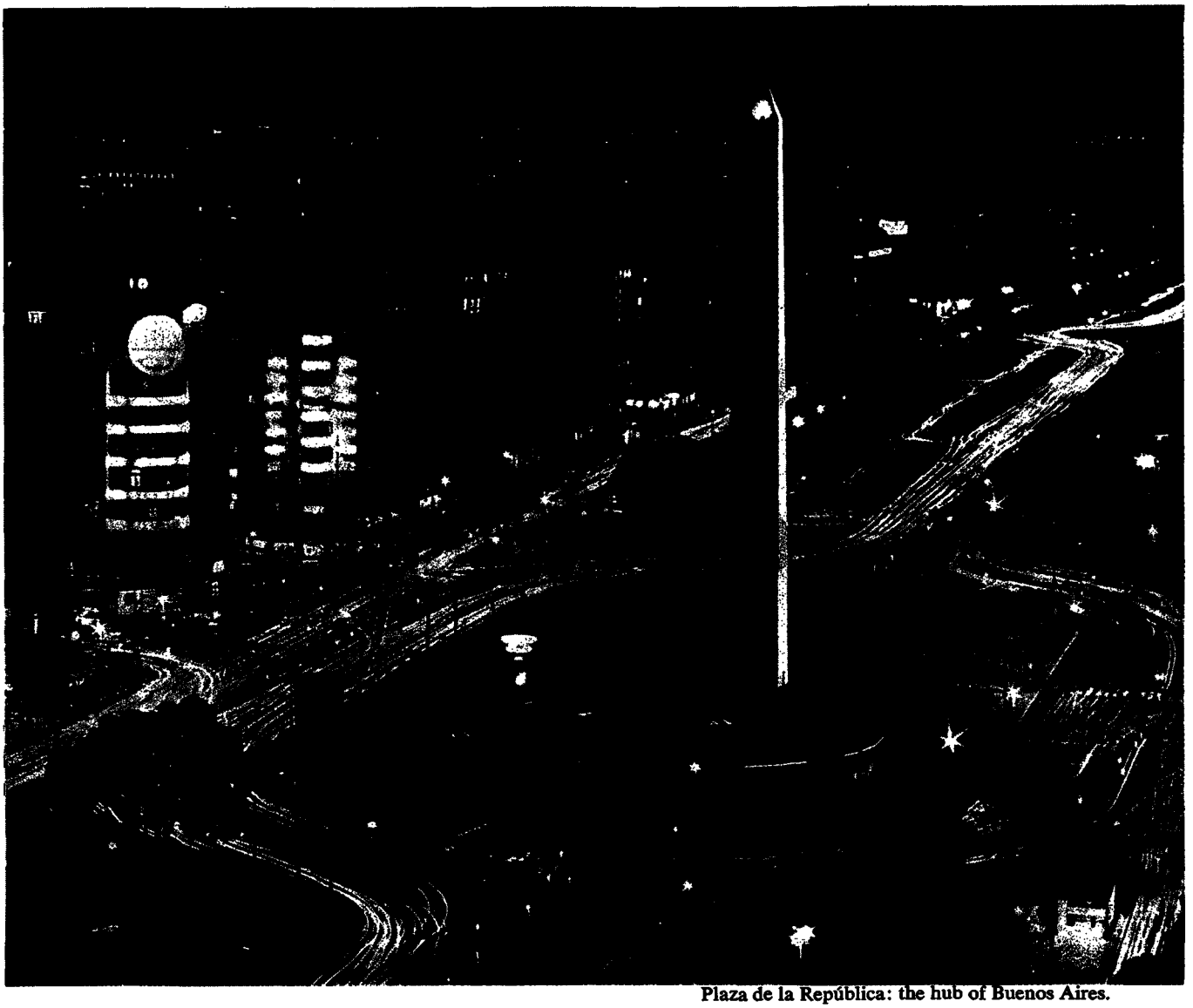

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icy conclusions follow from it. . . . Mr. Draper's basic proposition is that we invariably end up by having recourse to violence when influence, properly used, or sometimes passivity, would have sufficed, and violence is futile. The proposition is too general to argue with, but a few comments may be in order nevertheless. First, our present worldwide policy is, if anything, less violent than our past one in dealing with our world then—the American continent and surrounding islands. Second, passivity did pay off in Indonesia (and might elsewhere) but did not in China. (Perhaps it would have been right for Vietnam. But to withdraw now is not to be passive; it is to surrender.) I would propose it for Rhodesia and South Africa. Would Mr. Draper? Certainly we have been overactive in the wrong places and underactive too. But is Mr. Draper saying more than that the correct policy is always best?

I sympathize with Mr. Draper's wish to avoid military involvements. Yet he overestimates what influence alone, as distinguished from force, can do. Foolish as we may have been to support Batista, it does not follow that a better policy would have headed off Castro. We did oppose Trujillo—but did not budge him. We did oppose Duvalier but he thrives, while Haiti does not. Tito and the Soviet Union have not been able to dislodge the Albanian pro-Chinese government by influence. Draper's belief in the omnipotence of influence is no less superstitious than the belief in the omnipotence of force which he attributes to our government. Which to use, when, and how, is the question. It is not answered by generalities even if they glitter as dazzlingly as they do when polished by Mr. Draper.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Theodore Draper is not alone in assuming that the foiling of the attempted Communist coup in Indonesia by a group of generals, backed by ultra-nationalist extremists, is somehow a point for the U.S. in the cold war. But can anyone seriously think healthy a political process which overreacts to a threat, albeit a serious one, by wholesale slaughter and deportations of a large minority group (the Chinese)? For U.S. policymakers blithely to assume that all bodes well for our national interest in present-day Indonesian politics would be to invite further blunders of the kind Mr. Draper so admirably warns against.

ARTHUR W. WRIGHT
Oberlin, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Theodore Draper recommends that the U.S. government "give U Thant's proposals a chance to pull us and the Communists out of this morass (the Vietnamese War)." I presume his essay was designed to get its COMMENTARY audience to join others who are pressuring the President to:

(1) Cease the bombing of North Vietnam without any reciprocal action by Hanoi;

(2) Indicate American willingness to scale-down military activities leading to a cease-fire;

(3) Agree to enter discussions that would include the Vietcong.

Time in its issue of February 24th reported that Wilson of Great Britain urged President Johnson to extend the U.S. bombing pause beyond the truce deadline so that Hanoi would weigh the Russian peace proposals. These were substantially the three items listed above. All that the President asked was elementary reciprocity in exchange for a halt in the bombing. Premier Kosygin was unable to bring his friends to the peace table.

What would Mr. Draper suggest now?

NATHAN SIEGEL
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Draper's masterful indictment . . . is marred by only one . . . undocumented and possibly inaccurate argument. Concerning Indonesia, he suggests that we "inadvertently permitted the domestic forces in the country to work themselves out more freely." But Mr. Draper's assumption of our nonintervention in Indonesia really cannot be accepted short of a congressional investigation.

Max Frankel wrote in the New York *Times* of March 13, 1966 that "the United States continued to retain excellent contacts with the top military leaders even after Mr. Sukarno had renounced American aid. . . ." His colleague, James Reston, wrote on June 19 1966, "Washington is careful not to claim any credit [for the rightist coup in Indonesia] . . . but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it."

Such statements "prove" nothing,

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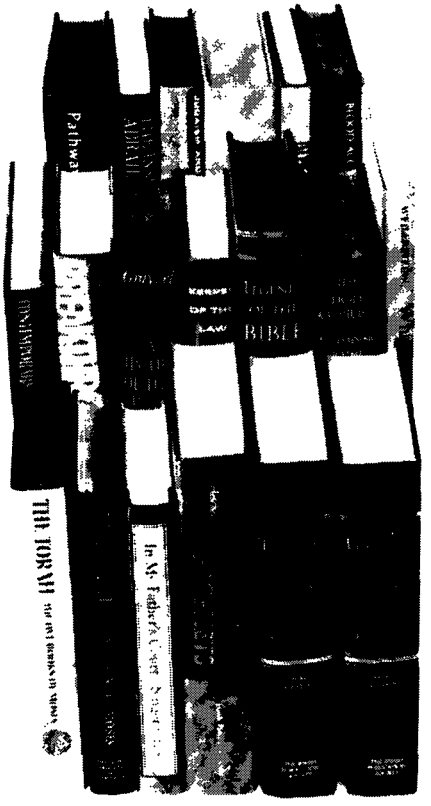

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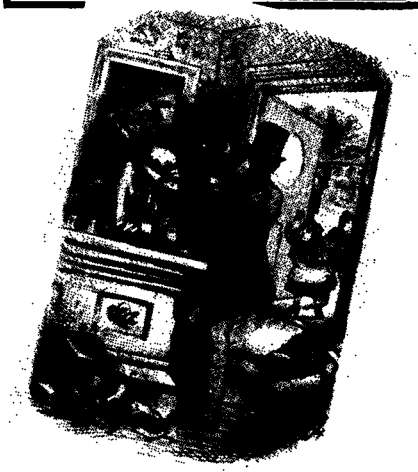

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but go far to suggest . . . C.I.A. involvement, with a consequent responsibility on our collective conscience for the massacre in Indonesia. Certainly one cannot exculpate our C.I.A. without further inquiry.

HOWARD N. MEYER
Rockville Centre, Long Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I take it from Mr Draper's conclusion and, indeed, from the entire tone of his article, that the battle we must win is a political one, yet the larger historical problem according to him is "political and social." His policy, as outlined in his lamentations over Batista and Diem, would be to save the governments we are now backing around the world so that "Communism" may be stopped.

Might I suggest another alternative; that we win the social revolution by asking ourselves just why insurrections, which we almost invariably term Communist, occur. Could it be that the governments we support starve and suppress people and thwart even natural social and economic progress?

As long as the political front is considered primary, to be backed by the military, we will be fighting poor people all over the world. And it is their fight, not ours, that is just. We condone the slaughter of half-a-million Indonesians, invade small islands in the Caribbean because they have had, or are threatened with, successful left-wing revolutions, and drop more bombs on an ally (South Vietnam) than we did on Korea to stop a basically indigenous insurrection. But can we be men enough to shake up the status quo and offer people the possibility of genuine development, so that left-wing dictatorship is no longer the necessary alternative to misery?

Mr. Draper might stop shedding tears for Batista and start looking at Duvalier.

HARVEY WASSERMAN
The Michigan *Daily*
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Many people are unaware of the following facts, which . . . indicate that President Kennedy was probably at the point of reversing his Vietnam policy.

On November 15, 1963—one week before the assassination—U.S. Headquarters in Saigon announced plans to withdraw 1,000 of the 16,500 "military advisers" then serving in Vietnam, beginning December 3. This fact was published by the New York *Times* of November 23, 1965. According to an article by Ted Knap in the Washington *Daily News*, September 23, 1966, plans for withdrawing 1,300 men were announced two days before the assassination. (It is not clear whether this was a revision of, or an addition to, the earlier plans.)

At a public hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 25, 1966, Senator Wayne Morse made the statement that "U.S. policies in Vietnam would have been different" had Mr. Kennedy lived. Senator Morse recalled that he had visited the President about ten days before the assassination; when the talk turned to the Senator's criticism of the U.S. role in Vietnam, the President said "he wasn't sure but that I was right" and that he had the Vietnam situation under "intensive study." When Senator Morse expressed concern that the presence of U.S. "military advisers," as they were then called, would eventually lead to the sending of U.S. troops outright, Mr. Kennedy "indicated that was not his intention. . . ."

Had President Kennedy lived, Vietnam might not be threatening world peace today.

ALICE ALT
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on Theodore Draper's excellent study in which he describes our doomed resort to military power following the failure of our inadequate economic and political policies.

Every political or economic victory for the West means a political or economic defeat for the Soviet bloc (excluding the Maoist countries) which, if no longer monolithic, is still allied. The pressure is then on them to escalate to military power—for they are, alas, subject to the same personal, psychological, and domestic political forces as our own leaders.

The future shapes up as an alternation of victories and defeats for each side, carefully calculated and staged, with an occassional "minor" bloodletting acceptable to the great powers and tragically imposed on the puny pawns. . . . The daily costs in blood and treasure will inevitably destroy freedom, while the ultimate cost (of an all-too-probable miscalculation) will destroy mankind.

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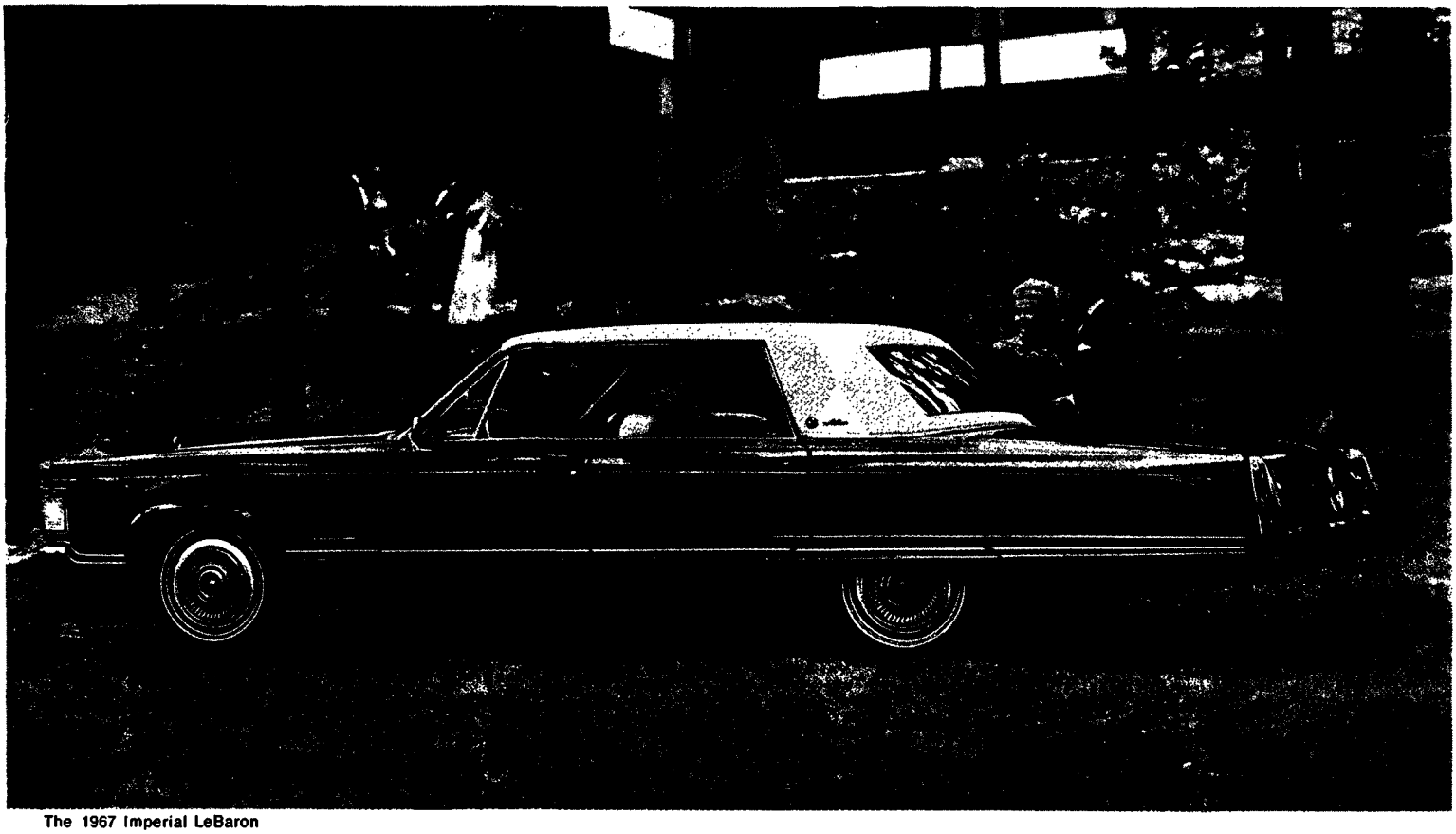

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abandon the cold war and to carry on the struggle for worldwide human freedom, dignity, and economic well-being through an entirely new foreign policy. This would call for non-aggressive but nonetheless coercive initiatives by the United States, to force benign responses from our present opponents. Obvious areas where immediate initiatives of this kind are feasible are economic development through the UN, food for all, the conquest of space, etc. . . . What it would take to change our attitudes and make such a policy feasible . . . requires careful study. . . .

CHARLES BLOOMSTEIN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As James Reston so aptly said, President Johnson "moves with the tides of power." It seems very unikely, therefore, that petitions from college professors, intellectuals, and churchmen, or brilliant articles like "The American Crisis" will ever change his frozen Vietnam policies. But suppose every concerned American were to send him, beginning today and every day from now on, a brief letter or postcard saying . . . "Please stop, Mr. President"? Could the White House long withstand such a tidal wave of protest? . . .

JAMES B. GORDON
Detroit, Michigan

MR. DRAPER writes:

The questions raised by Mr. Gans are so broad and far-reaching that I shrink from trying to answer them simply and briefly. Some of the questions are so "loaded," moreover, that I could not accept them in their present form. Castro, Mao Tse-tung, and Ho Chi Minh, for example, are not merely "foreign scapegoats" of a malevolent American foreign policy; they sin at least as much as they are sinned against; they look for trouble at least as much as they are troubled; they would be anti-United States even if the United States lived up to its highest democratic ideals because those ideals are profoundly antipathetic to them. Unfortunately, almost all of Mr. Gans's questions require questioning of this sort. Nevertheless, I do not wish to imply that the fundamental question he poses—what is the basic "sociological" reason for such botcheries as have occurred in Cuba, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic?—can be ignored. On the contrary, it must be faced, and the first step is at least to raise it.

To my mind, we have done some bad things, and we have done some potentially good things badly. Our pro-Batista policy in Cuba, before Castro took power, was utterly indefensible on any count because it did not even give us a "strong man" to lean on. But our Dominican policy after Trujillo's assassination was a changing mixture of "good," "bad," and "indifferent," always full of confusions and contradictions that ended up in a disaster. If the pattern of the three recent interventions could be reduced to "an inevitable consequence of American capitalism," the problem would be much simpler than I think it is. One trouble is that "American capitalism" is itself so manysided, divided, and forced to contend with essentially non-capitalistic forces, that it is rarely clear where its own interests lie. The only ones who always seem to be sure what the self-interest of the capitalists is, are the Communists. And they seem to think or pretend for propaganda purposes that whatever the capitalists do is in their self-interest, an oversimplification that gives the capitalists too much credit for knowing what is, in the long run, good for them. In fact, if capitalism always acted in its enlightened self-interest, it would get into much less trouble. If I were a devotee of American capitalism, I would take the position that our Cuban, Dominican, and Vietnam adventures weaken and endanger it rather than strengthen and protect it. In effect, we can and should do much better with what we have, whatever it is and whatever we may think of it. This is a somewhat different approach to the question that Mr. Gans raises, and I would recommend it for those who do not wish to go as far as he does in questioning the present social order, much as it also needs questioning.

I am grateful to Professor van den Haag for representing a point of view that I consider pernicious, dangerous, and increasingly popular in some circles. At least this kind of discussion enables us to know more clearly what we are disagreeing about.

The preoccupation with "decision-making" is rapidly becoming a political and intellectual plague. "Decision-making" is paramount, of course, for those who are in a position to make decisions. But

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does everyone else have to pretend that he is President or Secretary of State, with the same resources and responsibilities? It would do no good anyway because the President and Secretary of State then tell us that we do not have their sources of information and, therefore, cannot tell them what decisions to make. If we try to play this game, we are damned if we do and damned if we don't. I would be prepared to abdicate all judgment in favor of the President and Secretary of State if the record would show that their decisions in recent years have been so obviously right.

Those who consider "decision-making" and "policy conclusions" to be the be-all and end-all of political thinking, with everything else "irrelevant," would have us live and think eternally in the present, with even the immediate past relegated to some kind of limbo. But are the past and present and future as cut off from each other as Professor van den Haag implies? If he had said that "historiography" cannot tell us *everything* about decisions that should be made, I would heartily agree with him. But *nothing*? Or take this dictum: "Political decisions require analysis not of past mistakes and opportunities but of the future effects of actually present alternative policies." Why not of both? Why should they be so mutually exclusive? The gauging of "future effects" is notoriously tentative and treacherous. If past experience can help us in *anything*, why ignore it because it cannot do *everything*? In fact, our policy-makers are constantly leaning on precedents from the past; they have justified our intervention in Vietnam as a direct extension of the Truman Doctrine of 1947. Here I am inclined to believe that *they* are still living in the past and have not come to terms with the present changed relationship of forces inside both the Communist and non-Communist worlds. Thus two can play at this game. But I am mainly concerned, in principle, with distrusting the dichotomies that Professor van den Haag seems to dote on. I still prefer the wisdom of Santayana that those who refuse to learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.

Unfortunately, Professor van den Haag may have missed the main point of my article. I wrote it because I was struck by an unprecedented phenomenon in our entire history: three military interventions, Cuba (by proxy), Dominican Republic, and Vietnam in four years (April 1961 to April 1965). Never before has there been such an epidemic of U.S. military interventions, and in countries in which the United States had preponderant political and economic influence. I tried to draw attention to what I considered to be a general crisis of U.S. foreign policy, not merely a problem of Vietnam. To do so, I had to enlarge the historical perspective; I attempted to delineate the marks of this crisis in the immediate past so that we might recognize them in the future. Is this merely a "diversion" and a brilliant "irrelevancy"? On the contrary, I think that we are living through a historical period in which recurrent problems are occurring in different countries and in different forms but with alarming common elements. In short, there are problems and problems. Policy-makers, to their own loss, may have to foreclose the past (though they always seem to invoke it when it suits their purposes); they may have to operate in a permanent present and hypothetical future; the day-to-day problems they deal with may debar them from analyzing, and thereby learning from, past mistakes. But must everyone else be condemned to taking such a narrow view of all our problems? I rather suspect that Professor van den Haag's ostrich-like attitude merely serves as a rationale for evading the deeper and larger problems that beset our foreign policy.

Finally, I must caution against some of his factual assumptions. The Dominican intervention was hardly as successful as he seems to think; the stability and effectiveness of the Balaguer regime are extremely dubious; another crisis is building up there, and apparently it will again catch us by surprise. I would no more counsel U.S. military intervention in Rhodesia and South Africa than in the Dominican Republic. We shamefully supported Trujillo for about twenty-nine years; when I visited the Dominican Republic in the heyday of Trujillo, the U.S. ambassador permitted his son to walk around in the uniform of the Trujillo youth movement; we opposed Trujillo during his last two years in power after he got too big for his britches and had exhausted his usefulness. And to say, as Professor van den Haag does, that I believe "in the omnipotence

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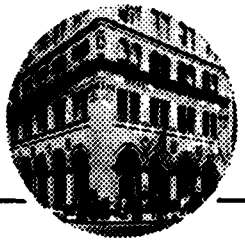

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of influence" is simply a gratuitous piece of nonsense. If he will look at the last paragraph on page 45 of my article, he will see that I explicitly repudiated belittling the "importance of power in the conduct of foreign policy." What I questioned was the omnipotence of power; I did not advocate the omnipotence of "influence," whatever that is.

In reply to Mr. Chase: The worst excesses in North Vietnam came in the first two years of Ho Chi Minh's regime, 1954-56. They proved so costly that a milder policy was adopted thereafter, though even a "moderate" Communist policy is not my idea of the good life. On the whole, Ho Chi Minh has shown throughout his career a propensity for making deals, and I do not think that this problem is an insuperable one if dealt with by the Vietnamese themselves. As the late, lamented Bernard Fall was fond of pointing out, a good deal of North Vietnam's bureaucracy is made up of holdovers from the former French colonial regime. By the way, we protected hundreds of thousands of Cubans by inviting them to the United States after we pulled out of Cuba. At worst, we would have to do the same for a few thousand Vietnamese. This is hardly a pressing or even a pertinent problem in the present state of war. As for the reference to Indonesia (also raised by Howard N. Meyer), I consider it to be utterly groundless, and I have dealt with it at greater length in my forthcoming book, *Abuse of Power;* space is too limited here to go into it.

If Mr. Wasserman would have mentioned where and when I had shed tears for Batista, I might consider stopping. One is always in a quandary about the advisability of "answering" this kind of perversity; even to deny it gives it a status it does not deserve.

I beg to be excused from replying to Mr. Cooper; these are subjects for another article.

And to Mr. Siegel: The question of "reciprocity" is discussed at some length in my article in a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books.*

The Economy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Professor Lekachman can certainly make a good and even an honest case for what he wishes to show in his "Death of a Slogan—The Great Society 1967" [January]: things are not as good as they ought to be. Why then does he resort to cheap rhetorical tricks?

(1) Lekachman writes that corporate dividends rose 43 per cent (after or before taxes?) in 1960-65 while "take-home pay of factory workers increased only 21 per cent or in real terms 13 per cent." In other words, Professor Lekachman deflated take-home pay increases but not dividend increases. Moreover, he neglects to add increases in fringe benefits (excluded from "take-home pay") which account for part of the difference between pay and dividend increases. Finally, Lekachman knows—but does not mention—that profits rise more and faster than wages in prosperity, and fall more and faster than wages (even becoming negative) in recession. He knows too that in the long run profits (and dividends) have risen less than wages.

(2) Professor Lekachman maintains that the middle and upper classes (rather than the lower) are helped by federal aid to elementary and high schools because it reduces their local tax burden. Actually, the federal taxes from which the aid comes are more progressive than the local taxes—e.g., sales taxes—which they may replace. It is questionable, moreover, that localities would have taxed themselves at all for the purposes accomplished by federal aid. At any rate, Professor Lekachman might have told his readers that he advocates the federal aid (or doesn't he?) but likes to object when the government does what he advocates (perhaps he's right there).

I regret that "The Great Society 1967" is shot through with this sort of thing and ends appropriately by stating that the United States is "a conservative and racist" country. Professor Lekachman either associates the U.S. with Nazi Germany (or, at the least, with South Africa) or if he doesn't, he wishes to mislead his readers into making this association.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . There are signs everywhere that President Johnson will not win his "war" on poverty, ignorance, disease, and unemployment any more than did Franklin Roosevelt, thirty years ago, with his New Deal

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palliatives which Mr. Johnson's stratagems so closely resemble. The poverty which millions suffer in the United States is built into this affluent society as logically and as firmly as are the riches of its millionaires. The operation necessary to cure the deeper . . . malady of which poverty is but a symptom is not only beyond the powers of the available practitioners, but would never be permitted by those who alone could authorize it.

What Mr. Johnson should be tinkering with is not poverty, but an obsolescent machine that was not originally designed to function without the compensator of mass indigence. The deprivation which is its inevitable by-product . . . can never be eliminated so long as one man is permitted—nay, encouraged—to extract a profit from the necessity of another man—from his food, his housing, his health, the education of his children, the work of his hands, and the ideas of his brain.

There are some indications that this age-old ethic of scarcity is changing. The labor unions, the graduated income tax, Social Security, Medicare, and now the first faint whisper of a guaranteed annual income for all are portents that man can master his greed, his self-deceptions, and his alienation, and manage to contrive a truly good society. But the change will not come soon, and certainly not through such frenetic, politically-motivated adventurisms as the "Great Society"....

TAYLOR ADAMS

New York City

MR. LEKACHMAN WRITES:

Let me comment where comment is possible on Mr. van den Haag's declamatory letter. In the very sentence of which Mr. van den Haag complains, there is a clear comparison of corporate dividends (undeflated) and factory pay (undeflated). The first rose 43 per cent, the second 21 per cent. On the issue of wage and profit behavior in business cycles, something seems to have escaped my correspondent's attention. The United States is completing the sixth year of an expansion in which profits have steadily risen. Since Keynesian precepts on fiscal action are now public policy, it is extremely unlikely that profits will ever again become "negative," or, indeed, shrink very much or for very long. I disclaim knowledge of the long-run behavior of profits and wages which Mr. van den Haag imputes to me. Indeed the evidence for the statement must be my critic's little secret.

The last paragraph of the letter makes a charge which is as offensive as it is illogical. Reference to American racism (does Mr. van den Haag deny its existence?) scarcely implies association of the United States with Nazi Germany or South Africa. The allegation, I cannot help concluding, has rather more to do with Mr. van den Haag's overheated imagination than with anything I wrote.

Circumcision

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Erich Isaac's essay ["The Enigma of Circumcision," January] is excellent, except for the idea contained in his last two paragraphs: that the anthropological "function" of a mysterious rite is to be "at variance," to remind us that morality is not part of a rational order. That is, *credo quia absurdum*. But, as Freud reminded us, if this is where we end up, we do not have to go roundabout through a scholarly discussion. Would it not be better to say, "I don't know" and "I will" or "I won't"?

The Freudian explanation of such a variance—from the Jewish avoidance of human blood rites—would be, I suppose, that it is a compromise-formation to keep some disobedience or other crime in repression, as if to say (but of course the meaning must be "forgotten"): we will not sacrifice our children, though plenty of sheep and chickens, but here is a token. I am not offering this as an explanation, but it makes more sense than high-philosophical game-playing.

PAUL GOODMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To a physician with many years of experience in the treatment of genito-urinary diseases, Erich Isaac's article seems vacuous and misleading.

The manner in which he discusses the subject adds still further to the "enigma" which influential and rabid antagonists have deliberately undertaken to create, in order to stem the growing popular acceptance of circumcision. Knowledge of the medical and hygienic advantages of the operation has convinced the majority of American physicians to favor circumcision at birth, at which age major complications are extremely rare.

Isaac stresses the specious claims and arguments of the diehard opponents of circumcision . . ., but ignores entirely the large and steadily growing body of authoritative medical literature . . . that is in favor of circumcision as a cancer preventive....

His discussion of the religious aspects of circumcision primarily as an ancient blood rite . . . still further confuses the issue. If it is true, as Isaac says, that ". . . circumci-

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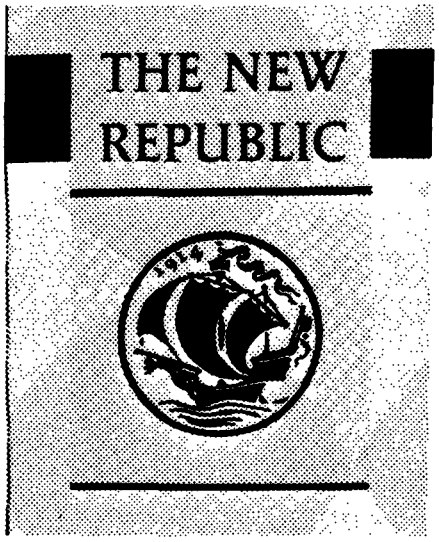

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sion is a blood rite, and Judaism is clearly at variance with the idea of blood rites," why didn't he extend his research a little further to fathom the possible reason underlying this ancient and apparently empirical rite? He would have discovered, had he read the work of Brim and others on this subject, that Moses was a well-trained and highly competent sanitarian who had observed the serious epidemics of venereal diseases that broke out among his followers after their participation in sexual orgies. For certain socio-political reasons, most of these Jewish followers, with the exception of the Levites, were not circumcised, and the poor sexual hygiene and lack of proper sanitary facilities that prevailed in the desert through which they wandered had become a serious problem.

Whatever the hypothetical biblical arguments pro and con may be, circumcision probably began as a hygienic measure, and was found so effective that it was later promulgated into a religious rite in order to assure universal compliance. . . .

My own discovery twenty-five years ago that the Gentile patients in my urological practice showed an incidence of cancer of the prostate twelve times greater than the Jewish prostatics was a forerunner of the present widely held virus theory about the origin of certain cancers in humans. At that time I suggested that genital cancers were caused by a virus (from a secretion under the foreskin) transmitted from person to person through sexual intercourse like a venereal infection. During the past few months, the reported finding of viruses in cancers of the prostate and of the cervix have corroborated this concept.

Isaac is a specialist in the geography of religion with little or no knowledge of cancer or venereal disease. He presents a patently biased and distorted view of the subject and presumes to disparage the medical and hygienic value of circumcision. Unfortunately his article, like others of similar character . . . can only lead to further confusion and doubt about the efficacy and innocuousness of the procedure among the lay public. To trifle with this problem is a serious injustice, since it can hinder progress toward the prevention and eradication of genital cancers which comprise about one quarter of all cases of cancer with its annual death toll of approximately 65,000 persons in this country alone.

DR. ABRAHAM RAVICH
Miami Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Erich Isaac's article is very interesting and provocative. However, the author omits mention of an ancient myth that throws light on the institution of circumcision among the Canaanites, and is at the same time of great psychoanalytic significance. This is preserved in the writings of Philo Byblios, who quotes the description of the Phoenician religion written by Sanchuniathon, a priest of ancient Beirut. From this we learn that on an occasion when pestilence and destruction threatened his city, the god Kronos (or El) sacrificed his son to his father Ouranos (Heaven); he also circumcised himself and ordered his divine associates to do the same. Evidently, therefore, in the Phoenicio-Canaanite religion, circumcision is a substitute for the more drastic measure of self-sacrifice, and reminded El of the act which he himself performed.

When Israel crossed the Jordan the people underwent circumcision (Joshua 5), probably in order to gain the good will of El, whose land they were about to enter. El and Yahweh came in time to be revered as the same deity.

Fortunately, Judaism discarded the ancient Canaanite meaning of circumcision and reinterpreted the rite as a sign of the covenant between Yahweh and His people.

DR. ROY A. GREENBERG
New Orleans, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Erich Isaac digresses from his central theme of the biblical implications of circumcision to its medical implications, and leaves the uninformed reader with the impression that the medical advantages of the procedure have not been substantiated.

This is not so. Circumcision has for so long been almost universally practiced in this country as to render the occurrence of cancer of the penis here a relatively rare event. I daresay that the great majority of American physicians practicing today have never seen a single case.

There are, however, populous geographic areas where the proce-

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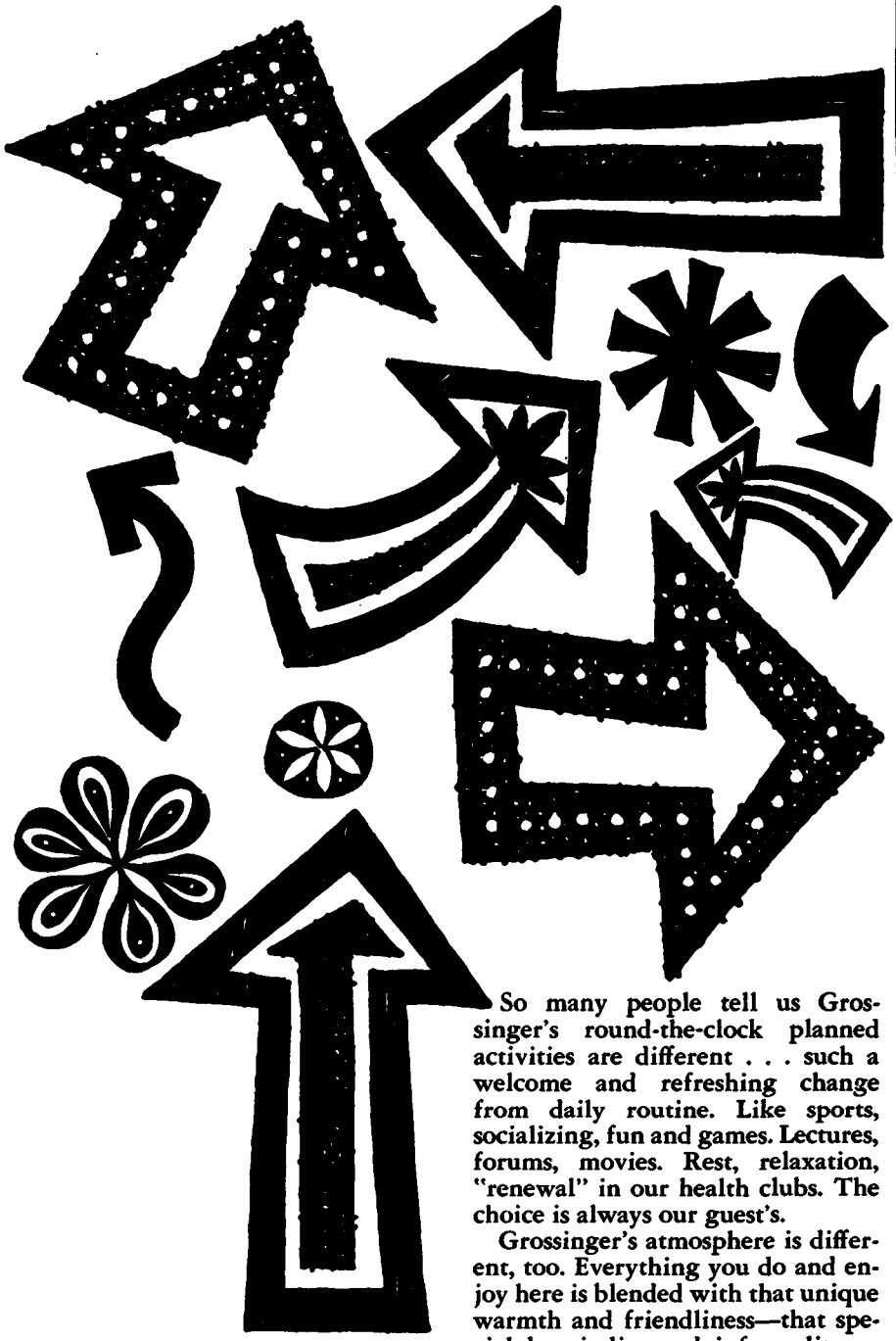

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dure is practiced only out of religious belief, affording the opportunity to contrast the incidence of penile cancer amongst both those circumcised and those who are not.

A current report of such a study, which spanned twenty-two years, appears in the January 1967 issue of the *Journal of Urology:* "Cancer of the Penis in India." I shall not burden the reader with the statistics evolved, but merely quote the author's conclusion: "Our data also indicate a very definite relationship between the occurrence of penile cancer and the practice of circumcision. Observers believe that penile cancer could be totally prevented if circumcision were performed in the newborn as practiced by Jews."

A practicing urologist for nigh on twenty-seven years, I have only once encountered a patient with "foreskin envy" sufficiently disturbing to motivate his pursuit of a cure. A gentleman in his mid-sixties, who had been circumcised at birth, was so disturbed by his loss that he came to inquire of me whether or not it was surgically possible to replace the part. I told him that if he would bring the missing part in, I would be more than willing to attempt the reunion.

DR. WALTER BERLIN
Portland, Oregon

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Isaac suggests that circumcision is a covenant rite basically similar to the rite of cutting an animal in two when a covenant is made, and that the act of cutting was symbolic of "a prior and subsequent state of wholeness." His reasoning, however, is unconvincing. Certainly the only two examples he gives—the mythic cutting of the Gordian knot and today's practice of cutting ribbons over new highways—are shaky at best. But there is evidence from various Near Eastern documents indicating that severing an animal was indeed a symbol of conditional cursing. For example, in a list of curses in the Bargaya-Matti'el treaty we read: "Just as this calf is cut in two (ygzr), so may Matti'el be cut in two, and his nobles cut in two [if Matti'el violates the treaty]."

Isaac approached the probable solution of the circumcision problem when he pointed to its context, Genesis 17. In this covenant, Abraham is first promised many offspring. Then the application of that covenant to Abraham's offspring is emphasized at each step of God's declaration. Isaac notes that . . .

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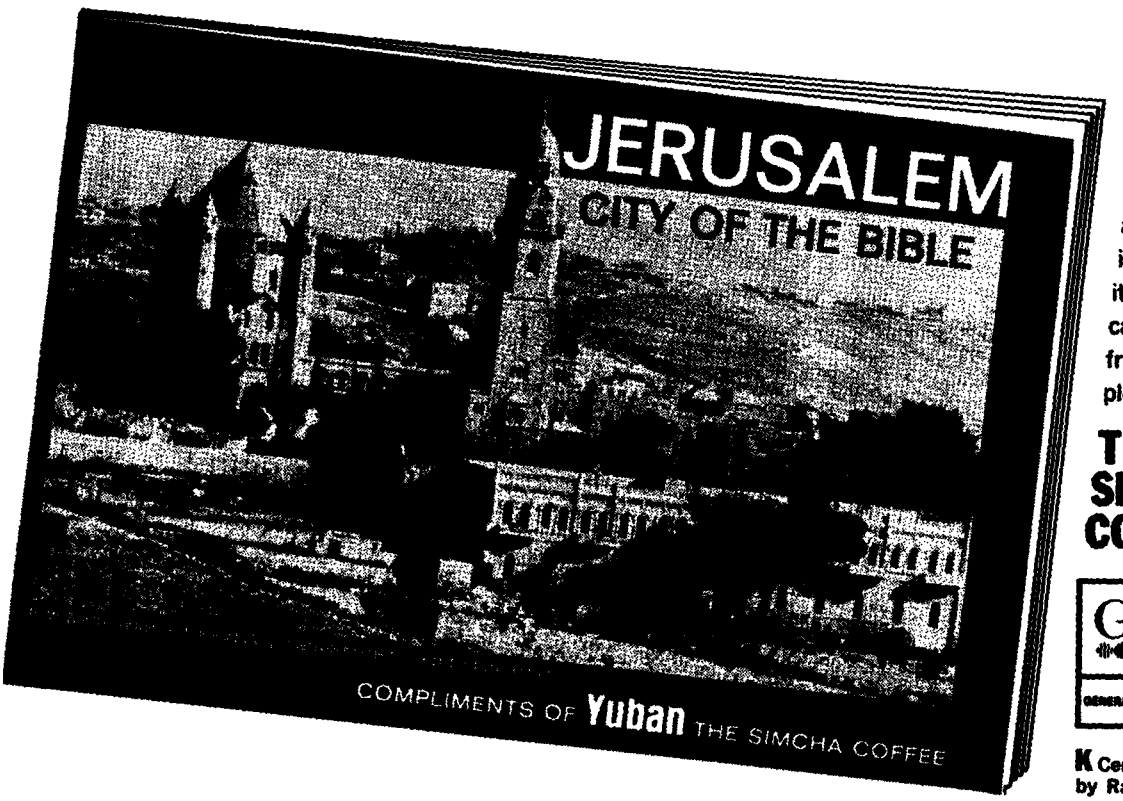

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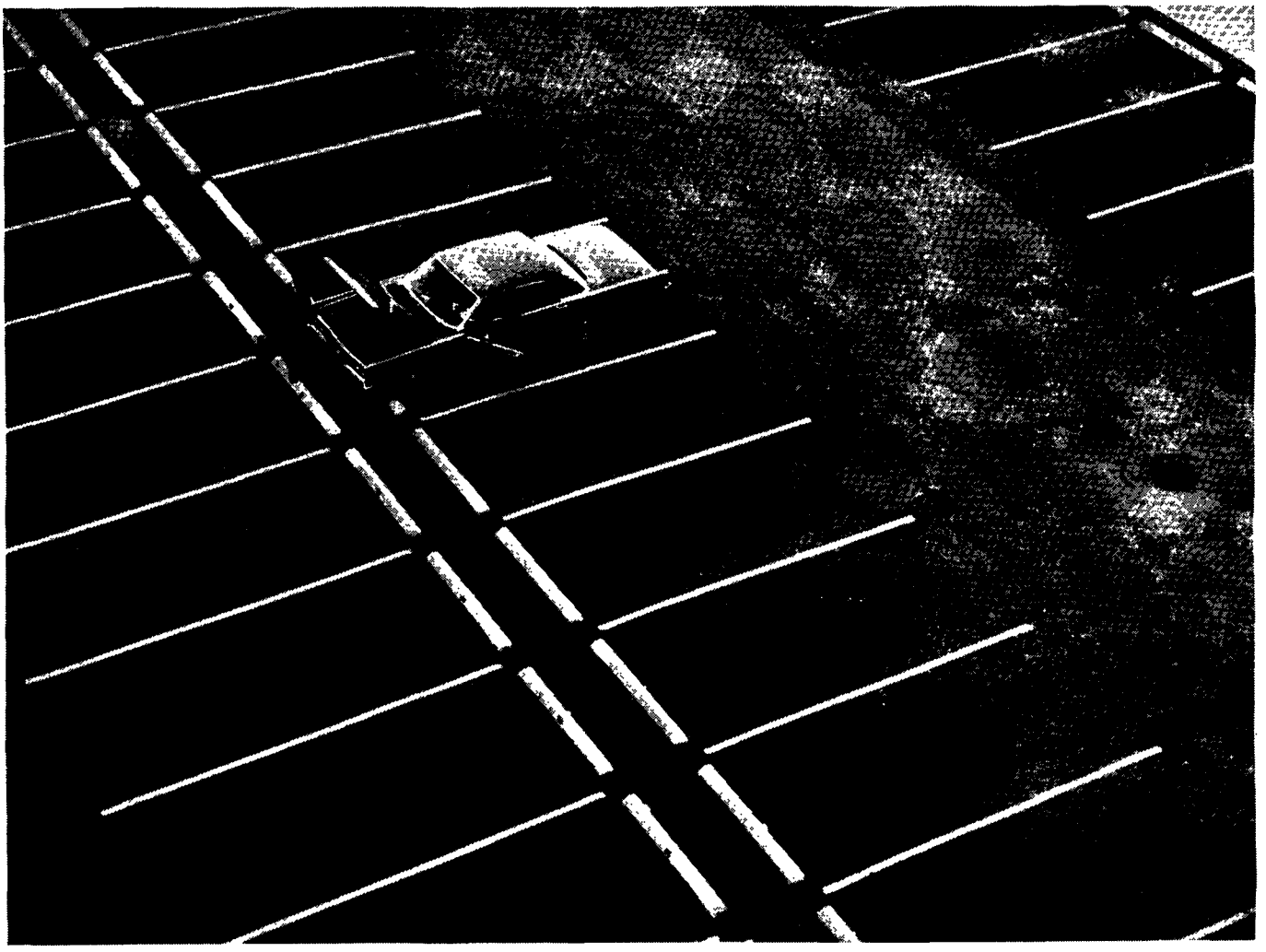

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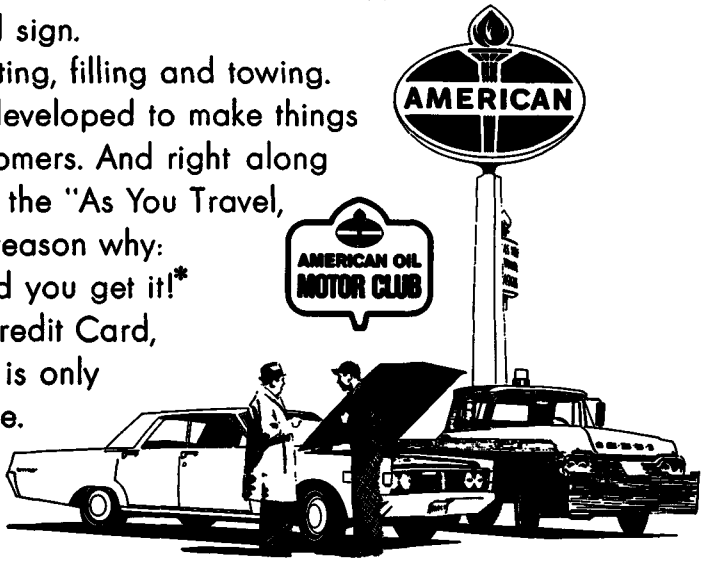

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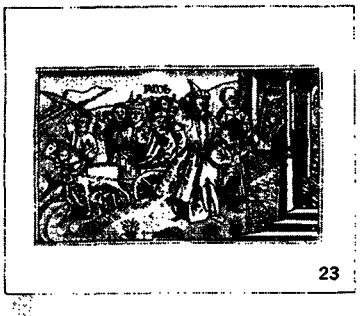
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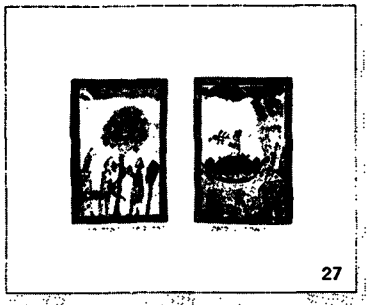
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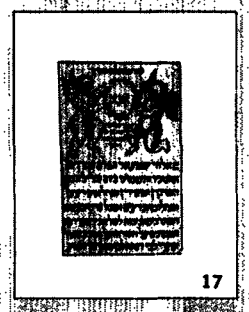
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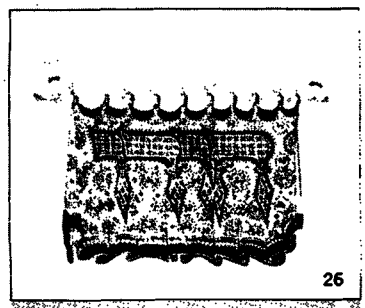
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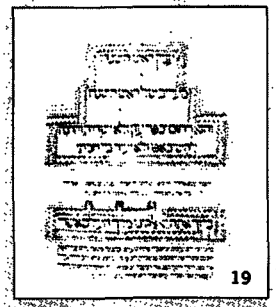
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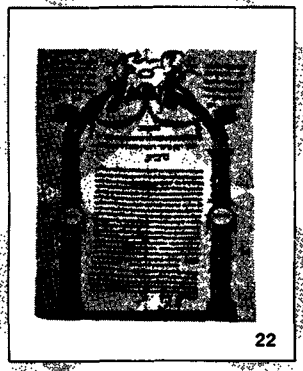
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16. Prayer for wine from a manuscript ritual for circumcision. Afghanistan, 17th century.

17. Prayer for travel written by Simon ben David Ulam (Ullman). Palatinate, ca. 1780.

18. Book of Esther inscribed as a teaspoon in the form of a bear. Russia, ca. 1870.

19. Illumination of evening prayer which begins observance of Rosh Hashanah. From an Italian Mahzor, 15th century.

21. "Shoshan"—the lily symbolizing Israel. Illumination of the initial word of a poem for the Day of Atonement. Rhine Valley, ca. 1380.

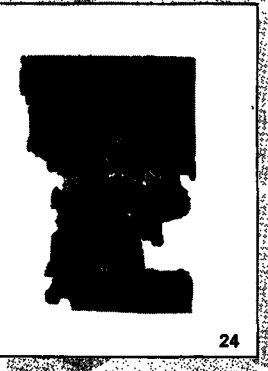
22. Ketubah (marriage contract). Lisbon, 1830.

23. Jacob before Pharaoh. Woodcut from Koberger Bible. Nuremberg, 1483.

24. Illustration from the book of Nehemiah and Ezra, two parts of a poetical paraphrase of the Pentateuch. Poetra, 17th century.

26. "Praise be the Lord." Illumination from a Haggadah completed in Italy, 1484, by the scribe Joel ben Simeon of Cologne.

27. Left: Adam and Eve. Right: Noah releases the dove. From a miniature book of daily prayers for the Omer or Sephirah period between Passover and Shavuot. Central Europe, 1803.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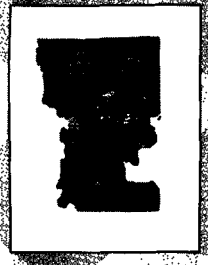

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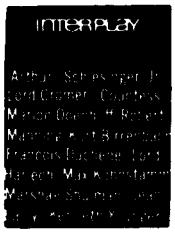

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one may look for a clue to Abraham's circumcision in the link between circumcision and the promise of offspring. "The rite then becomes a purely medical operation to remove an obstruction which made the patriarch infertile." This far-fetched medical explanation, however, is certainly not the only possible one for the link between circumcision and the promise of offspring.

A likelier explanation . . . is that circumcision is a sign of God's ownership of Israel. This sign may be similar to the marking of the ear of a Hebrew slave who chooses perpetual bondage (Exodus 21:6). The ear may have been the place for the mark because it is the organ of hearing, and in Hebrew, hearing and obeying are not separate concepts. The circumcision is then the sign of Israel's perpetual bondage to God. The sexual organ was the place for the mark because the covenant so symbolized was closely bound with procreation and progeny. It is not impossible that other nations which practiced circumcision likewise considered it a sign of a covenant made by their god with themselves and their offspring.

MICHAEL V. FOX
Cincinnati, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Could it be that circumcision had its beginning as a substitute for human sacrifice, a humanizing symbol for the atrocious act?

Early . . . society frankly regarded man's sex organ as his most prized possession, his most creative tool. To offer up a part of the child's penis, while still a bloody sacrifice, was harmless, and no longer murder. Yet this act still served to bind the child to God, and bind God to him in holy covenant. The spiritual God, who no longer needed human sacrifice, evolved in man's searching mind. . . .

LEAH LIEBERMAN
Miami Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Since Dr. Isaac challenges the anthropologist to offer an explanation for the persistence of circumcision, I shall begin with the relevant passage from Exodus 4: 24-26. In the new JPS translation of the Torah it reads as follows:

> At a night encampment on the way, the LORD encountered him and sought to kill him. So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying "You are truly a bridegroom of blood [*hatan damin*] to me!" And when He let him alone, she added, "A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision."

If, as Isaac believes, it is Moses's son who is in danger, and if Zipporah used the word *hatan* in its Midianite sense ("circumcision") rather than its Hebrew sense (usually "bridegroom"), the mystery still remains why the boy is in danger, for the slaying of the Egyptian first-born is quite far in the future. In Jewish folklore, moreover, it is assumed that Moses was the one threatened; according to Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Bible,* Moses was being punished for his lack of faith, "while he was on the road to Egypt. The angels Af and Hemah appeared and *swallowed his whole body down to his feet,* and they *gave him up* only after Zipporah . . . circumcised her son Gershom and touched the feet of her husband with the blood of the circumcision." This legend does not resolve the mystery, but I shall return to it and several ethnographic parallels below.

Although the pronoun references in the key passage are obscure, I shall assume (with the legend) that it was Moses who was endangered and saved by the sacrifice of his child's foreskin. Why Moses should feel threatened is only comprehensible in the total context of Exodus 3 and 4. From these verses it is clear that Moses was returning to Egypt most unwillingly. He offers several excuses of the "Why me?" variety, including his slowness of speech, but God insists, shows him signs which he can use and appoints Aaron as his spokeman. . . .

Moses knows his mission will be difficult, for God warns him that Pharaoh will not listen to him until the slaying of the first-born (Exodus 4:21-23). With this prophecy ringing in his ears, Moses sets out for Egypt; but soon he is attacked by a manifestation of the Lord. What is the nature of this "attack"? My suggestion is that Moses suffered a severe attack of *anxiety* in the form of a nightmare or a hallucination. He was, after all, under tremendous psychological stress: his inner conflicts concerned his mission to Egypt and his meeting with Aaron, but there was also the fact that his own first-born son was as yet uncircumcised! Legend explains this omission as the result of an agreement with Jethro; but with God's prophecy of the imminent slaying of first-born Egyptians,

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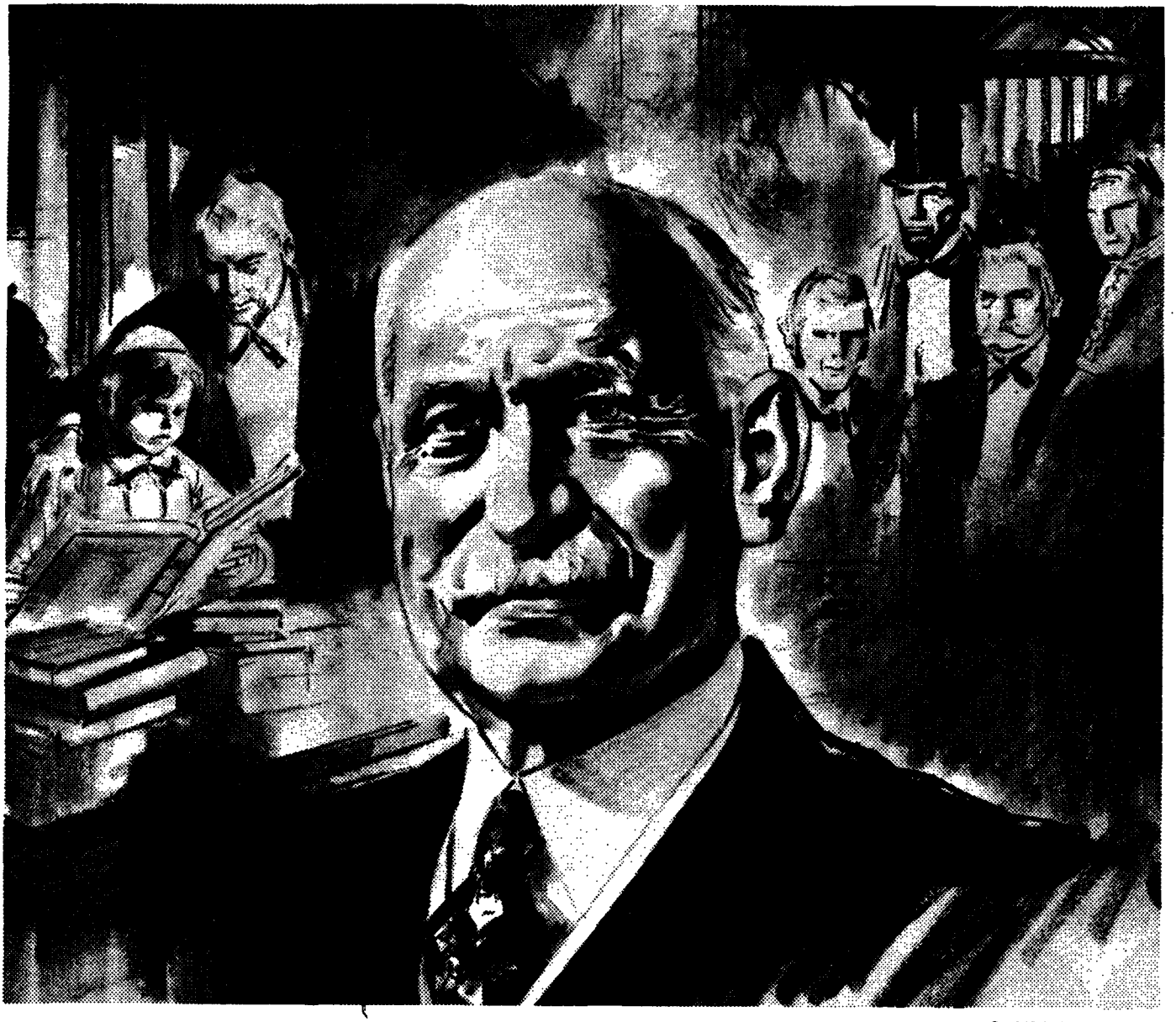

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Ambassador of Jews

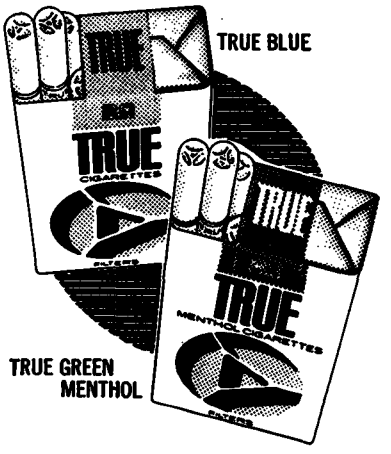
Simon Wolf was often referred to as "Ambassador of Jews in the U.S. to Washington." For over half a century he labored to help his co-religionists.

He came to America from Germany as a lad of twelve with a love of learning and a devotion to Judaism absorbed from his father, a teacher of Hebrew. The democratic and liberal ideas fostered in his childhood led him to forgo a business career with his uncles in Cleveland for the challenge of law and public affairs.

Lincoln and the slavery issue attracted him to the new Republican Party. He used it as a springboard to launch a lifelong crusade against anti-Semitism. The confidant of every president from Lincoln to Harding, he was one of the most effective spokesmen and lobbyists the Jewish people have ever had.

He spent his life fighting bigotry and prejudice both here and abroad. He worked tirelessly for Jewish causes and public welfare, struggling to ameliorate anti-Jewish policies and to counteract the bureaucratic red tape which continuously threatened America's "open door" policy to immigrants. By his 80th birthday he had been instrumental in preventing the deportation of at least 103,000 Jewish refugees, officially inadmissible to the U. S. because they had fled Russia penniless and without proper papers.

When he died in 1923, Simon Wolf's eulogy was delivered by former President William Howard Taft, then Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Justice Taft declared in part: "He was a leader in Israel, and had the interest of his people deeply at heart... In his death the country loses a patriot, and the Jewish people a strong man."



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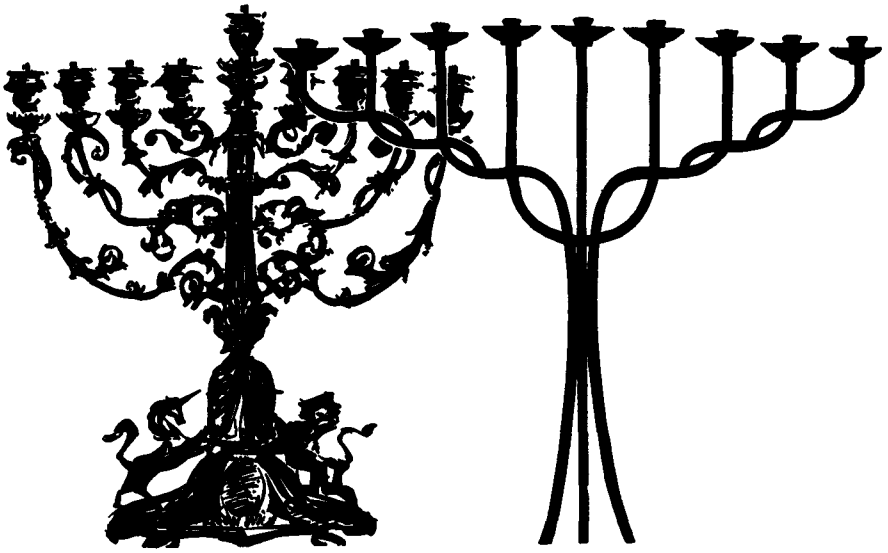

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Moses's guilt . . . must have increased.

I take it that Moses was so severely stricken that only a dramatic act could relieve his anxiety or depression. Thus, Zipporah took matters into her own hands and, with little formality, circumcised the boy, smearing the genital blood upon her husband's legs. This apparently relieved Moses. But why? And what is the significance of the words spoken by Zipporah?

I suggest that the circumcision was not sufficient to insure Gershom's future safety, since his mother was a non-Jew, but that by the smearing of genital blood, which signifies *rebirth,* Moses was made the *symbolic mother* of his own son.

There are many biblical and ethnographic precedents for this interpretation. As E. M. Loeb pointed out in his 1924 monograph on *The Blood Sacrifice Complex,* in aboriginal Australia and parts of New Guinea, every male "must be circumcised before he ranks as a full-grown man, and the tribal initiation, of which circumcision is the central feature, is conceived by them as a process of being swallowed and disgorged by a mythical monster . . . . the act of circumcision itself was conceived to have been the bite of the mythical monster, who, satisfied with this portion of the flesh of the youth, refrained from devouring his victim." It is a long way from Israel to Australia, but the similarity to the legend of Moses and the angels is striking.

The theme of *swallowing and disgorging* is widely distributed; it is regularly associated with myths and rituals of rebirth, as is the use of *blood as a linking or protective substance.* When Rachel asks Jacob to cohabit with her maid, Bilhah, "that she may bear on my knees and that through her I too may have children" (Genesis 30: 4), the phrase "on my knees" may be merely idiomatic. But I feel it is entirely possible that Rachel became the (symbolic) mother of Dan and Naphtali in part through having the actual blood of childbirth fall upon her legs. It is notable that at a traditional *brith,* the child is placed on the knees of the *sandek* (godfather) during the circumcision.

As Bruno Bettelheim has shown in *Symbolic Wounds,* male initiation ceremonies often reveal an unconscious envy of the male toward the sexual organs and functions of women. He cites many examples from Africa and Oceania indicating

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that the relation of male sponsor to the initiate is one of symbolic mother, with genital blood playing a central role in the rebirth symbolism. The *couvade* is another widespread ritual, in which the father of a newborn child rests and is subjected to various restrictions for some time after childbirth while the mother goes about her usual tasks. Bettelheim ascribes this custom to the males' need "to fill the emotional vacuum created by their inability to bear children."

These examples are given here only to illustrate the diversity of ways in which male anxiety (or envy) may be ritually eased. In the case of Moses, folklore has intuitively expressed the motivations—conflict, sibling rivalry, and fear for the son's Jewish identity—which are latent in the biblical account. Ethnographic comparison reveals the probable meaning of the incident, for all of the elements of the story point to the ancient ideas of protection, rebirth, and symbolic motherhood through the medium of (genital) blood. . . .

What is the bearing of this upon the persistence of circumcision in the modern Jewish community? Isaac's conclusions may be edifying but they are not very helpful, for "the Jew who accepts this covenant rite" is usually but eight days old. It is, of course, the parents who "accept" the covenant, and the ritual is performed by a group of males while the mother is, by tradition, excluded from the ceremony. Whatever its present-day rationalizations, I feel that the underlying motivation for the continuation of circumcision involves a desire to *protect* the child by symbolically asserting his rebirth from the father(s), thus incorporating him into the Jewish community, allaying anxiety about his future identity, and emphasizing the importance of the male in producing the new generation.

PHILIP K. BOCK
Department of Anthropology
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

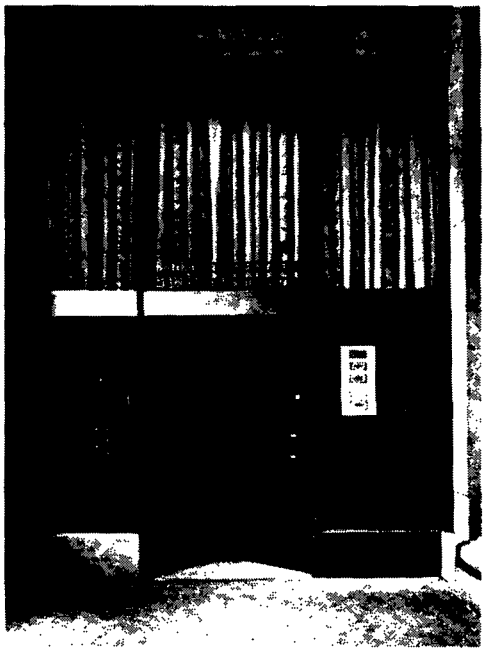
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . How could you allow in your columns without the sharpest protest or . . . denial the following remarks?: "He finds the explanation for the widespread acceptance of circumcision in the perverted component of the circumciser's libido" and "the sadism of the crypto-pervert."

How can a Jew write such things

In Beer Sheba

or on Wall Street



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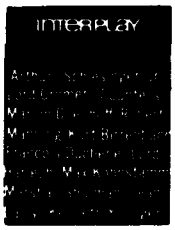

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on what Judaism always considered the holy covenant?

The author continues: "The reason that American mothers have gone along with the operation is that they are hostile to their male children."

I knew that Freud had spoiled much, but I did not know that his influence went so far as to cause people to write such nonsense. Is there any intelligent person in the world who would say that Jewish mothers let their boys be circumcised because they are hostile to them? Is the author trying to say that Jewish mothers love their female children and hate their male children and that non-Jewish mothers, who do not allow their children to be circumcised, do love their male children? . . .

[Dr.] S. B. Ullman
Toronto, Ontario

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . In the portion of Erich Isaac's article where the medical value of circumcision is considered, it is suggested that if circumcision proved to possess hygienic utility (value), then the religious significance of this practice would in some way be diminished. What is thereby suggested, more generally, is that the ascription of non-religious utility to a religious practice can somehow jeopardize the religious significance of the practice. This belief confuses what is and what ought to be—two separate and distinct domains of human life. . . .

Just as a scientist of religious persuasion need not approach his work fearful that new researches will force him into apostasy, a religious leader devoted to scientific advancement need not be concerned that new insights into religious values may compel him to renounce the novelties of science. Despite the anxieties of its high priests, the Church has survived the Copernican Revolution. And I know of no religious insight that has stemmed the flow of scientific discovery. . . .

It follows that the religious value of a given practice cannot be the ground for determining the non-religious utility of the practice. If circumcision is without medical value, this must be ascertained on non-religious grounds. Isaac appears to know this (it is not possible to say clearly whether or not he holds the incorrect belief that his article suggests), for he cites one medical authority. But there are other medical authorities who do not accede here, for example, Dr. Abraham Ravich, a noted urologist, . . . [See Dr. Ravich's letter above—Ed.]

Martin L. Kempner
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

To the Editor of Commentary:

In America nearly all male children are circumcised, for most physicians believe that it contributes to the personal hygiene of married couples, removes a source of infection and anatomical impediments in adult life, and nearly eliminates certain types of genital cancer in both male and female. . . . As long as this scientific evidence is accepted as valid, circumcision will continue to be universally practiced. To explain the motivations behind it as the perverted libido of the circumciser, the sadism of the crypto-pervert, the hostility of mothers to male children, the aspirations of a matriarchal society, or foreskin envy of the circumcised male, seems farfetched.

. . . To allow laymen who have no training and are totally ignorant of bacteriology, anatomy, and surgery to perform circumcision reflects the backwardness and conservatism of the rabbinical establishment. . . . In America, it would be more reasonable to train physicians in the religious ritual than to train laymen in surgery. . . .

The enigma of the origin of circumcision goes back to the dawn of man. Blood and genital have a special attraction to the speculative human mind and have often figured in religious rites. . . . Nowadays circumcision is accepted as the natural thing to do, whatever its origin. It is a wonderful, intimate Jewish ceremony more beautiful than a wedding and—as everyone knows—one that lasts forever.

Isaac Horowitz
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Mr. Isaac writes:

Drs. Berlin and Ravich are obviously right in noting that I am not a specialist on cancer or venereal disease. However, I am sufficiently a geographer to be impressed by the variable geographic incidence of cancer (e.g., the Finnish rate for genital cancer is one of the lowest in the world and less than 0.1 per cent of the male population is circumcised), and the shoddy "statistics" concerning the frequency of cancer at different organ sites in the several culture-geographic settings for which such data exist. From such strictures I can-

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not exempt Paymaster's and Gangadharan's article in the *Journal of Urology*. It seems as if those working in the area of geographic and comparative ethno-sociological pathology of genital cancer have never heard of the need for proper description of racial and social groups, migration patterns, urban-rural and economic distributions, over- and under-diagnosis, and of the sources of error related to hospital or physician selection—or even of the highly variable incidence of the famous rites of soap and water.

What is established is that Jews are generally free of some genital cancers. But what this means is another question. Studies which are least guilty of statistical sin have generally pointed to factors other than circumcision. In perhaps the first carefully done study by gynecologists, social workers, biostatisticians, and biochemists of control groups of circumcised and uncircumcised non-Jews, no correlation was found between the incidence of cervical cancer and the absence of circumcision in spouse or other sexual partner [*American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology* for July 1958]. The factors that seemed most important to the authors of this and of similar subsequent studies were marital stress, class and caste, early sexual maturity, early childbearing, multiple divorce and remarriage, early premarital and frequent coitus, etc.

THE EXPLANATION for low incidence of genital cancer among Jews may be twofold. One may be the persistence of an originally religiously based sexual ethic which has retained a stronger hold on secular Jews than they care to admit. It is a hold much lamented by some psychiatrists who diagnose it as the mainspring of "Jewish" psychiatric problems. Secondly, the assumption of a genetic basis among Jews for certain kinds of immune reactions is more plausible than circumcision as an explanation, especially in view of indications of viral pathogenicity of cancers. Parenthetically, to date no carcinogenicity has been demonstrated for the "secretion . . . under the foreskin."

It would seem clear that the biblical lawgiver showed an outstanding grasp of epidemology and public health matters in his social and family law. But the grasp is evident in the social law, not in surgical prescriptions. For to suggest that circumcision was intro-

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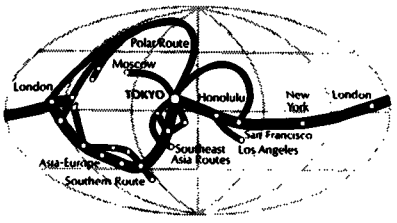

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duced by Moses to reduce venereal diseases among his followers after their sex orgies is absurd. In biblical tradition circumcision is Abraham's covenant rite and recent research shows the likelihood that it was of relatively local West Asian origin and introduced into Egypt (*Journal of Biblical Literature* vol. 85, part 4, 1966, pp. 473-76). This at least conforms to the general pattern of the biblical narrative, while Dr. Ravich's fantasies do not.

There is no palaeopathological evidence supporting the prevalence of venereal disease in ancient Israel and in any case, venereal disease is increasing in the United States at a frightening rate despite widespread circumcision. Obviously, there may indeed turn out to be a correlation between circumcision and the rarity of some genital cancer, but as I stated in my article, there is as yet "no conclusive evidence" of such a correlation.

MR. FOX's example of "conditional cursing" is appropriate and he might have quoted many more examples (as I did in *Anthropos,* 59, 1964). But to explain the meaning of the rites in this way is to miss the point. These are not voodoo or Uroi rites, putting the hex on somebody, conditionally or otherwise, but integral elements of covenant ceremonies, and the evidence in the ancient Near East as well as elsewhere is overwhelming that the contract oath was originally a curse. Moreover, the divine prototypical oathtaker often stands between the pieces of a divided victim—hardly a case of conditional self-cursing. Abraham's covenant had strong overtones of a vassal-fealty treaty, and Mr. Fox is certainly on the right track when he writes of "circumcision as a sign of God's ownership of Israel." Striking similarities between ancient and classical vassal treaties and Abraham's covenant are the change of name (imperial imposition of regnal names on vassal kings have been extensively studied) and the ennobling act ("kings shall come out of thee").

The slave's punctured ear (Exod. 21:6) is a variant of very similar manumission ceremonials known, for example, in Babylonia, Greece, and Rome. But whereas in non-biblical instances the slave is set free in the ceremony, the biblical ceremony appears to be an anti-pagan reversal. The God who set free an entire people and punished its oppressive master abhors voluntary choice of slavery when the virtuous master is willing to let the slave go. The slave's ear is then marked, not as a sign of freedom, as it was elsewhere, but as a sign of lifelong bondage to a human master. In so far as all body markings are some kind of status heraldry, Mr. Fox's equation of the marked ear and circumcision is justified. But to use such categorization to explain one by another obscures the meaning of both.

MR. BOCK re-offers a translation which, following Kosmala, I rejected, uses a very late midrash to explain the ancient text, and draws ethnographic parallels, which if anything illuminate the foreign sources of the midrash, but have nothing to do with the meaning of circumcision in the Bible. Although it is my own feeling that anthropology, from a methodological point of view, is the most advanced of the social sciences, I do not feel that its contributions are evident in this letter. To draw upon an initiatory cannibalistic complex in which circumcision is sometimes also present (hardly *pars pro toto*) and which is probably a relic of an upper Palaeolithic hunting complex of very wide distribution, is to introduce a world picture that survives until the present in parts of Eurasia, but is hardly biblical. While the argument of my essay may not be conclusive, I would have to reject Mr. Bock's sources, except perhaps to agree with Bruno Bettelheim's evaluation of his own theory: "I am still unable fully . . . to explain circumcision."

APPARENTLY both Messrs. Ullman and Kempner wrote before they read. I did not find the explanation for circumcision in the "perverted component of the circumciser's libido and the sadism of the crypto-pervert." The author of an article in *Fact* did, and I mentioned the article, as I made quite clear, only to point out its absurdity. Neither did I say that hygienic value would reduce the religious significance of circumcision. I said that some Orthodox leaders felt that the stress on hygiene might lead people to ignore its religious meaning, and were therefore opposed to the operation being performed by doctors.

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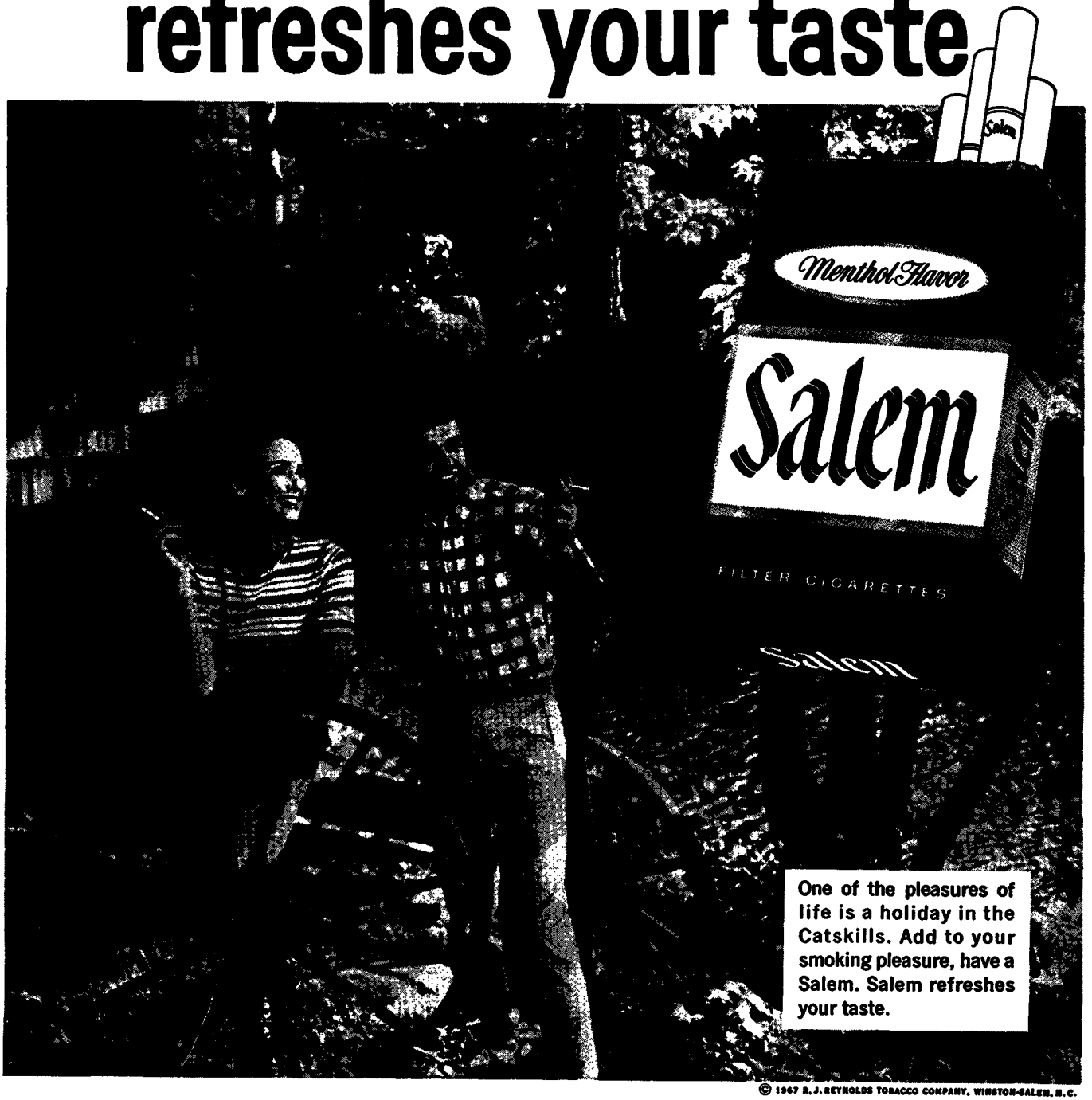
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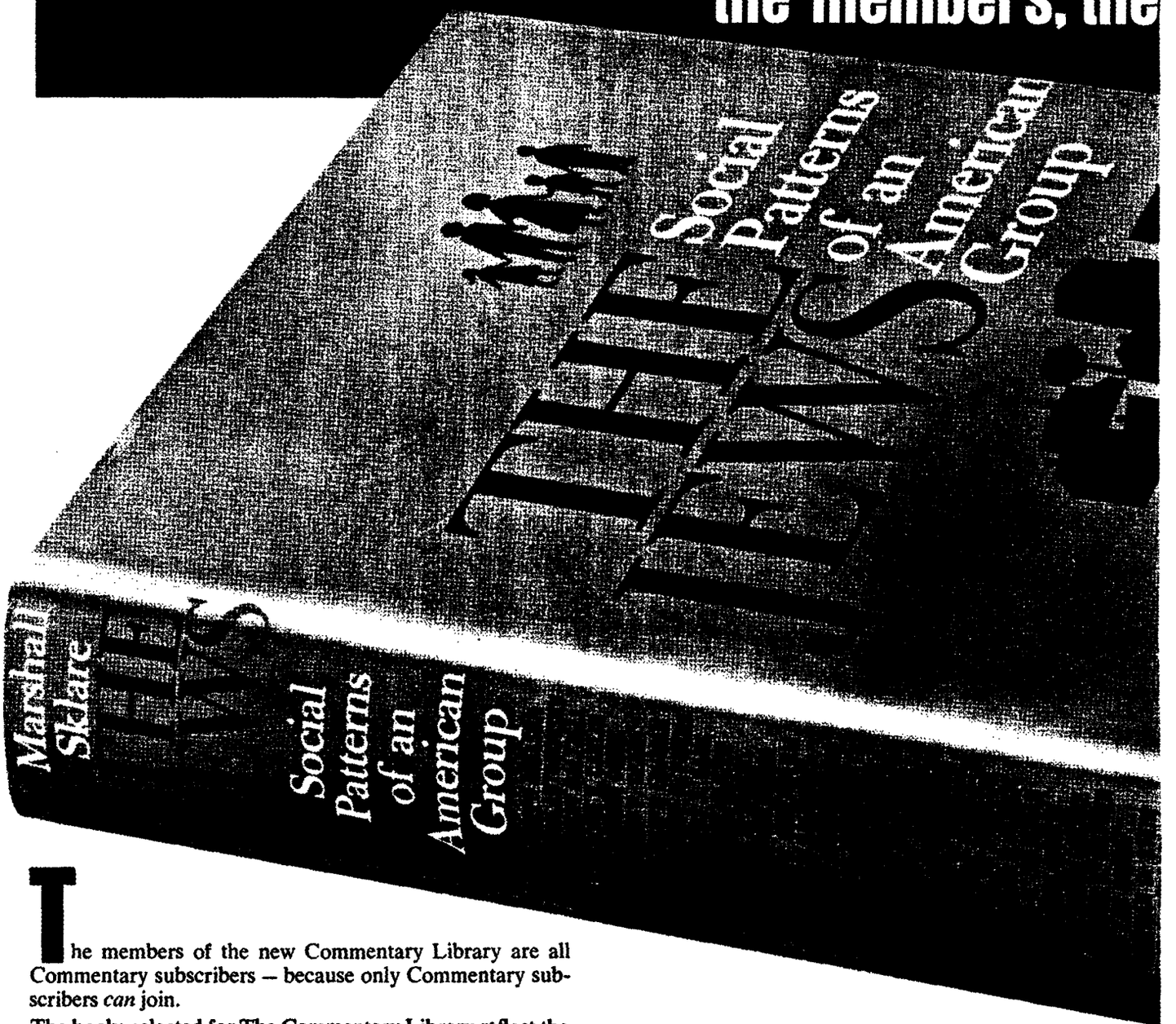

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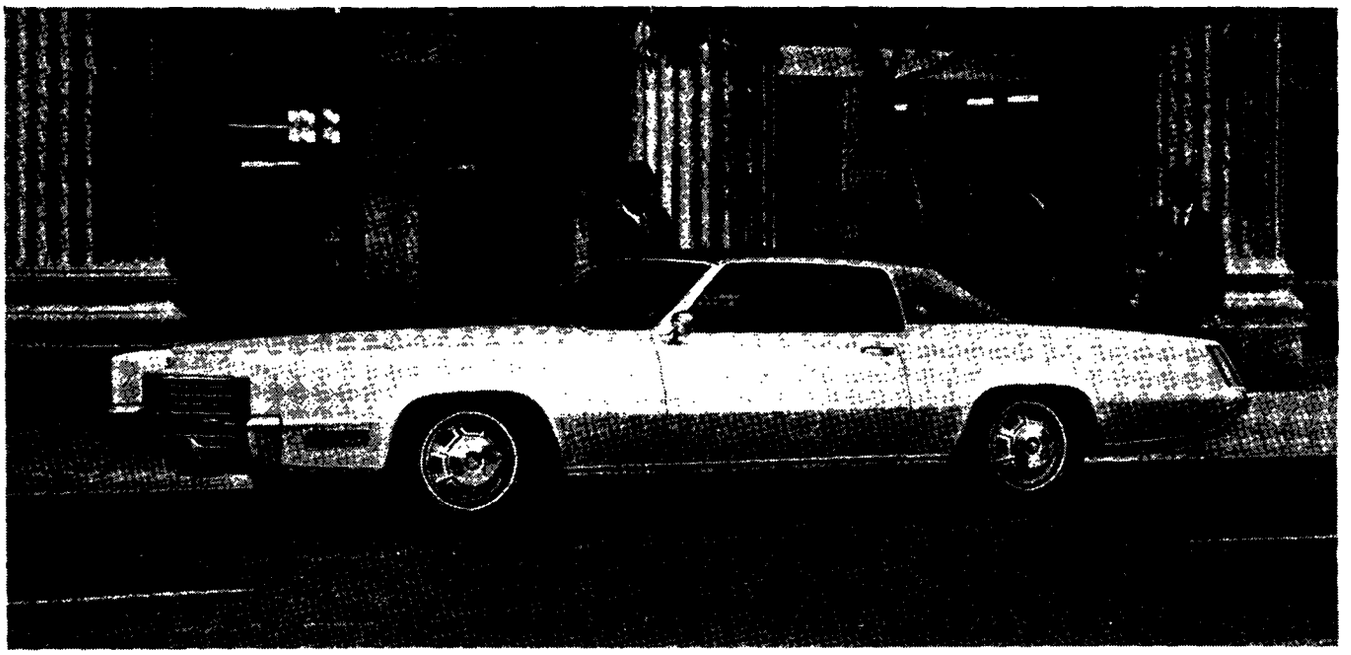

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A GUIDE TO REAGAN COUNTRY

The Political Culture of Southern California

JAMES Q. WILSON

A PERSON like myself, who grew up in Southern California, finds it increasingly difficult to understand people who say they understand California. "Explaining California," especially Southern California, has always been a favorite pastime for New Yorkers and Bostonians who have changed planes in Los Angeles, or made a two-day trip to the RAND Corporation, or just speculated on what kind of state could be responsible for Hollywood. Nor need one be an Eastern to play the game; living in San Francisco carries with it a permanent license not only to explain but to explain away (*far* away) Los Angeles.

This game might have been regarded as an amusing (though to me, irritating) diversion so long as what was being explained or "understood" was Hollywood and Vine, or orange-juice stands shaped like oranges, or Aimee Semple McPherson, or the Great I Am, or traffic on the Los Angeles freeways. It became a little less amusing when the same "explanations" thought appropriate for Aimee and the poor orange-juice vendors (most of whom, by the way, have disappeared) were applied to the John Birch Society and other manifestations of the Far Right. Anybody crazy enough to buy orange juice at such places or to drive on those freeways must be crazy enough to be a Bircher. Let two Birchite loudmouths pop off anywhere else in the country and we rush to our sociology texts to see whether it is alienation or the decline of the small entrepreneur that is the cause; let two of them say the same thing in Los Angeles, and we just smile knowingly and murmur, "It figures."

Even this systematic application of the double standard was harmless enough before Ronald Reagan. Now a striking conservative personality has become governor of the largest state in the union by an election plurality of over a million votes, most of which he picked up in Southern California. This Hollywood-actor-turned-politician ("it figures") has, to the amazement of many, made a rather considerable impression, not only on the voters of his state but on Republicans around the country including, apparently, a group of presumably toughminded fellow governors. From now at least through the 1968 convention we have to take Reagan quite seriously, and even if he fails to go the distance we must, I think, take Reaganism seriously. It will be with us for a long time under one guise or another. We will not take it seriously by trying to explain it away as if it were something sold at one of those orange-juice stands or preached from the pulpit at some cultist church.

I grew up in Reagan country—not Hollywood, but the lower-middle-class suburbs of Los Angeles. It was a distinctive way of life. I think I could still recognize another person who grew up there no matter where I should meet him, just as surely as an Italian can spot a person from his village or region even though they are both now in Queens. I am under no illusion that anyone has the slightest interest in my boyhood (I have next to no interest in it myself), but I do suspect that it may be useful to try to explain what it was like at least in general terms, and how what it was like is relevant to what is happening there today. Though I grew up and went to school there, I left a long time ago in order to acquire some expensive Eastern postgraduate degrees and a political outlook that would now make me vote against Reagan if I had the chance. I do not intend here to write an apology for Reagan; even if I thought like that, which I don't, I would never write it down anywhere my colleagues at Harvard might read it.

I

THE IMPORTANT thing to know about Southern California is that the people who live there, who grew up there, love it. Not just the way one has an attachment to a hometown, any hometown, but the way people love the realization that they have found the right mode of life. People who live in Southern California are not richer or better educated than those who live in New York; the significant point about them is that they don't live in New York, and don't want to. If they did, they—the average Los Angeleno (my family, for example)—would have lived most

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of their lives in a walkup flat in, say, the Yorkville section of Manhattan or not far off Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn. Given their income in 1930, life would have been crowded, noisy, cold, threatening—in short, *urban*. In Long Beach or Inglewood or Huntington Park or Bellflower, by contrast, life was carried on in a detached house with a lawn in front and a car in the garage, part of a quiet neighborhood, with no crime (except kids racing noisy cars), no cold, no smells, no congestion. The monthly payments on that bungalow—one or two bedrooms, one bath, a minuscule dining room, and never enough closets—would have been no more than the rent on the walkup flat in Brooklyn or Yorkville. In 1940, with the Depression still in force, *over half the population* of Los Angeles lived in single-family homes. Only about half of these were owner-occupied, but even to rent a house was such a vast improvement over renting an apartment that nobody looked back; they only looked ahead to the time they could pick up their own mortgage. San Francisco in the same year was another matter. Only a third of the population lived in single-family homes there, the reason being that there were almost no *houses* to rent; if you wanted a house, you had to buy it, and not many people in 1940 could afford to buy.

THERE HAS BEEN a good deal of loose talk about "radical" politics (which I suppose means anything to the Right of Earl Warren) developing out of a rootless, highly mobile population with no sense of *place*, of continuity, of stability. That may explain radical politics somewhere, but not in Los Angeles. The people who voted for Reagan have lived for years, in many cases decades, in Southern California. And they have lived in houses, not anonymous, impersonal apartment buildings.

Indeed, it was during the period of Los Angeles's greatest population growth that it voted, over and over again, for Earl Warren—the very embodiment (then) of moderation. The explanation, I believe, is quite simple: truly rootless, mobile people are more likely to vote the way established institutions—newspapers, churches, labor unions, business firms—tell them to vote. Revolutions are never made by the last man to get off the train; they are made by those who got off a long time ago and, having put down roots and formed their own assessment of matters, have the confidence, the long-nurtured discontent, and the knowledge of how to get things done sufficient to support independent political action. (Radical politics, I suspect, follows the same pattern as Negro riots: contrary to what the McCone Commission asserted but did not prove, the Negroes who rioted in Watts—or at least those who rioted violently enough to get themselves arrested—were Negroes who had been in Watts for a long time. Over half the teenage Negroes arrested had been *born* in California; over three-fourths had lived there for more than five years.)

In any case, it is a mistake to try to explain a particular election by underlying social trends. Elections, after all, are choices, and how they come out depends on who the voters have to choose between. That Reagan won last year does not mean that *last year* some ineluctable social force finally surfaced and carried the day. A vote for Reaganism was always possible in Southern California (and had revealed itself in countless congressional and local elections). The point I wish to make is that there has for a long time been a "Reagan point of view" in the Southern California electorate, that this point of view was powerfully shaped by the kinds of people who went to California and the conditions of life there.

The people who in 1940 lived in those hundreds of thousands of detached and semi-detached homes came from all over the country, but primarily they came from the Midwest, the border states, and the "near South." Almost none came from Europe: about 6 per cent, to be exact, had been born in Italy, Ireland, England, Germany, France, Sweden, or Russia; another 2½ per cent had been born in Mexico. (In San Francisco, the proportion of foreign born was twice as large.) But 28 per cent had been born in the American heartland—the dustbowl states (Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kansas, Nebraska), or the border states (Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky) and the upper plains (Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas). If you add in the nearby mountain and Southwestern states (Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada), the total proportion rises to over a third. And if you add in the persons whose parents had been born in these states, the proportion no doubt (there are no figures) exceeds a half. Again, San Francisco is a contrast—only about a tenth of its people in 1940 were from the heartland states. Between 1920 and 1940, during the Depression, over 400,000 persons born in the heartland moved to Los Angeles. *Less than a tenth* as many moved to San Francisco.

Except for Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, no Southern states are included in these migration figures. This is important to bear in mind—such conservatism as Southern California displays was not imported from the Deep South. In fact, even those who came from Southern states were likely to be from places like West Texas, where Confederate sentiment was never very strong.

These migrants were rural and small-town people. And here, of course, another popular explanation of Southern California politics takes the stage. These voters are supposed to yearn for the simpler life and the small-town virtues that they left behind. They are reactionary, it is claimed, in the precise sense: seeking to turn back the clock to a day when life was easier, virtues less complicated, and the Ten Commandments a sufficient guide. Perhaps so—there is no doubt

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some truth in this. But it flies in the face of the fact that these are people who *left* small-town and rural America (millions more stayed behind, after all)—and left it for jobs in big defense plants and large office buildings. I was never aware of any effort to re-create small-town America in Southern California, unless you put in that category the Victory Gardens people planted to raise vegetables during the war. On the contrary, they adopted rather quickly a suburban style of life, with its attendant devotion to the growing of a decent lawn (how many farms have you ever seen with a good lawn?). Furthermore, it is not the migrants themselves who on the whole have voted for Reaganism, but their children. The migrants voted for Roosevelt and Upton Sinclair and looked on disapprovingly as their children began to adopt the hedonistic mores of Southern California teenage life. There was as much intergenerational conflict among the Okies and Arkies in California as among the Italians and the Irish in Boston or New York. And yet it was these youngsters who grew up, married, moved out to Orange County or to Lakewood, and voted for Reagan and castigated Pat Brown, the last of the New Deal-Fair Deal Democrats. (To be completely accurate, a lot of the older people voted for Reagan, too, but they, I imagine, found it much harder to let go of their traditional attachment to Franklin Roosevelt and Earl Warren; the young people had no trouble at all.)

This is not to say that the migrants brought nothing with them. On the contrary, they brought an essential ingredient of Southern California life—fundamentalist Protestant individualism. We like to think of the store-front church as being a Negro invention; not so. I remember scores of white store-front churches—mostly of small Pentecostal and Adventist sects—lining the main streets of Long Beach. Most people, of course, went to established churches, but these were only bigger and slightly more orthodox versions of the same thing—Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Brethren, Church of God, and so on. Church was a very important part of life, but hardly any two people belonged to the same one. We were Catholics, and we had to drive out into the dairy farming country (I will never forget the way Sunday morning smelled—incense and cow manure, in equal portions) where there were enough Mexican farmhands and Dutch Catholic dairymen to make up a parish. All my friends sang hymns and listened to "preachin'." And the preaching was evangelical, fundamentalist, and preoccupied with the obligation of the *individual* to find and enter into a right relationship with God, with no sacraments, rituals, covenants, or grace to make it easy.

The religious character of San Francisco was strikingly different. In 1936 (the last time the government took a census of church organizations), 70 per cent of the reported church membership of San Francisco, but only 40 per cent of that in Los Angeles, was Catholic. And of the claimed members of Protestant sects, 40 per cent in San Francisco, but only 26 per cent in Los Angeles, belonged to the high-status, non-fundamentalist churches—Congregational, Episcopalian, Unitarian, and Universalist. Both cities had about the same proportion of Jews, but, as will be argued in a moment, the leadership, at least, of the two Jewish communities was rather different. Los Angeles, and even more its middle-class suburbs, was Protestant and fundamentalist Protestant at that.

THE SOCIAL structure did nothing to change the individualistic orientation of life. People had no identities except their personal identities, no obvious group affiliations to make possible any reference to them by collective nouns. I never heard the phrase "ethnic group" until I was in graduate school. I never knew there were Irishmen (I was amazed many years later to learn that, at least on my mother's side, I had been one all along) or Italians (except funny organ grinders in the movies, all of whom looked like Chico Marx). We knew there were Negroes (but none within miles of where we lived) and Jews (they ran Hollywood and New York, we knew, but not many of us had ever met one). Nobody ever even pointed out to me that I was a Catholic (except once, when a friend explained that that was probably the reason I wouldn't join the Order of De Molay, a young people's Masonic group).

The absence of such group identities and of neighborhoods associated with those identities may be one reason for the enormous emphasis on "personality." Teenagers everywhere, of course, place great stock in this, mostly, I suppose, because they feel such an urgent need to establish an identity and to be liked by others. But in Southern California, it went far beyond that—there was a cult of personality that dominated every aspect of life. Everybody was compared in terms of his or her personality; contests for student-body office were based on it. To be "popular" and "sincere" was vital. In a New York high school, by contrast, personality would have to share importance in such contests with a certain amount of bloc voting among the Irish, Italians, and Jews, or between "project" people and brownstone people, or even between leftists and far leftists.

Perhaps because of the absence of ethnic and religious blocs which in turn are associated with certain political positions, perhaps because Southern California (then) was very remote from those urban centers where "The Future of Socialism" was being earnestly debated, student life in and around Los Angeles was remarkably apolitical. Most people were vaguely for Roosevelt, though there was a substantial (and growing) group that announced defiantly that while their parents had voted for FDR in '32, and perhaps

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even in '36, they weren't going to do *that* anymore. Registered Democrats who voted Republican were commonplace, but after noting that fact there wasn't, politically, much left to be said. (It was different in downtown Los Angeles where the Jews lived; L.A. High, and later Los Angeles State College, were very political. A considerable Wallace movement flourished in 1948. Many of those people are now in the Democratic club movement.)

Politics for these people came to mean, in later years, expressing directly one's individual political preferences and expecting them to be added up by a kind of political algebra into a general statement of the public interest. "Bloc voting" and group preferences were unheard of and, when heard of, unthinkable. And the idea that political parties ought to do anything besides help add up preferences was most heterodox—the worst thing that could be said about it was that it was "Eastern." The well-known institutional features of California's political system—weak parties, the extensive use of the referendum to decide policy issues, nonpartisanship—were perfectly matched to the political mentality that was nurtured in Southern California.

That nurturing was distinctive but hard to describe. Rural Anglo-Saxon Protestants have lived in lots of states, but they haven't produced the Southern California style of politics anywhere else. One reason is to be found in what it was like, and to a considerable extent is still like, to grow up in Southern California. Everybody, as I have already noted, lived in a single-family house. There was no public transportation to speak of, so that the movement of people within the city followed no set corridors. People moved about freely and in so doing saw how everybody lived. That movement was institutionalized in the Sunday Afternoon Drive—not to the beach or an amusement park, but just "around" to look at homes, call on friends, or visit distant relatives. A house was, as a Catholic might put it, the outward and visible sign of inward grace. There was no anonymity provided by apartment buildings or tenements or projects. Each family had a house; there it was, for all to see and inspect. With a practiced glance, one could tell how much it cost, how well it was cared for, how good a lawn had been coaxed into uncertain life, and how tastefully plants and shrubs had been set out.

A strong, socially reinforced commitment to property was thus developed, evident in how people treat those homes today. An enormous amount of energy and money is devoted to repairing, improving, remodeling, extending, and landscaping. Even in areas with fairly low incomes, such as those where the elderly and the retired live, houses are not on the whole allowed to deteriorate. A family might buy a house for six or seven thousand dollars with, for the period, a big mortgage, and then spend several times that over a generation or two in home improvements. Those who could not afford it substituted labor for capital. People were practicing do-it-yourself in Southern California long before anybody in the advertising business thought to give it a name. Year-round warm weather made year-round outdoor labor possible—and, of course, year-round outdoor inspection by one's critical neighbors.

Much of this labor was cooperative. The Southern California equivalent of the Eastern uncle who could "get it for you wholesale" was the Los Angeles brother-in-law who would help you put on a new roof, or paint the garage, or lend you (and show you how to use) his power saw. A vast, informally organized labor exchange permeated the region, with occasional trades of great complexity running through several intermediaries—the friend who would ask his brother, the plumber, to help you if you would ask your uncle with the mixer to lay the concrete in front of somebody's sister's home. Saturday saw people driving all over the county carrying out these assignments.

DRIVING. Driving everywhere, over great distances, with scarcely any thought to the enormous mileages they were logging. A car was the absolutely essential piece of social overhead capital. With it, you could get a job, meet a girl, hang around with the boys, go to a drive-in, see football games away from home, take in the beach parties at Laguna or Corona del Mar, or go to the Palladium ballroom in Hollywood. To have a car meant being somebody; to have to borrow a car meant knowing somebody; to have no car at all, owned or borrowed, was to be left out—way out.

Those cars led parents and professional moralists to speak of "teenagers and their jalopies." They were not jalopies—not to us, anyway. The oldest, most careworn Ford Model A was a thing of beauty. To be sure, the beauty often had to be coaxed out; yet what was life for but to do the coaxing and take credit for the beauty? Beauty, of course, meant different things to different boys. For some, it was speed and power; and so they would drop a V-8 block into the "A" chassis and then carefully, lovingly, bore it out, stroke it, port it, and put two barrels or four barrels on it. For others, beauty was in the body, not the engine, and their energies would go into customizing the car—dropping the rear end, chopping down the top, leading in the fenders, stripping off the chrome (it took Detroit decades to recognize the merits of these changes and then to mass-produce them), and above all painting, sanding, rubbing, painting, sanding, rubbing—for ten or fifteen or twenty coats, usually of metallic paint. Again, warm weather made it easier—you could work outside year round and if you ran out of money before the job was finished (which was most of

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the time), you could drive around in the unfinished product with no top, primed but not painted, and no hood over the engine. Of late, Mr. Tom Wolfe of *New York* magazine has discovered car customizing and decided it is a folk art. It wasn't folk art in the 40's; it was life.

The sense of property developed by this activity has never been measured and perhaps never can be; I am convinced it was enormous and fundamental. After marriage, devoting energy to the improvement of a house was simply a grown-up extension of what, as a juvenile, one had done with cars. There is, of course, a paradox here: the car was used in great part to get girls. It was a hand-polished, custom-made rolling bedroom, or so its creators hoped. (In this they were as often disappointed as a Harvard man taking a Radcliffe girl into his house rooms during parietal hours; every girl likes to be *seen* in such places, but a distressingly small proportion are inclined to *do* anything there.) But the hedonistic purposes to which the car might be put did not detract from its power to create and sustain a very conventional and bourgeois sense of property and responsibility, for in the last analysis the car was not a means to an end but an end in itself. Shocked parents never got that point: they saw the excess that the car permitted, they did not see the intensely middle-class values that it instilled.

Low-density, single-family homes, a lack of public transportation, the absence of ethnic neighborhoods, and the use of cars combined to prevent the formation of streetcorner gangs, except in very central portions of Los Angeles and one or two older cities. The principal after-school occupation of a teenage Eastern boy from a working-class family is to "hang out" at the corner candy-store, the ice-cream parlor, or in front of the drugstore with class and ethnic compatriots. Having a "corner" of your own—or having "turf," in the case of the ambitious and imperialistic—would have made no sense to an equivalent group of young men in Southern California. The Eastern life-style produced a feeling of *territory*, the Western life-style a feeling of *property*. Teenagers in Southern California hung out together, to be sure, but not in any fixed spot, and where they did hang out tended to be a place reached by a car, with lots of free parking for other cars. The drive-in restaurant was the premier institution catering to this need. But it was also a very democratic institution, since it was not (and because of its location some distance from one's home, could not become) the "turf" of any particular gang. Rich and poor, Protestant and Catholic, anybody with a car could get there and, barring a losing fight over a girl, stay there. There were rivalries, but like modern warfare they tended to be between large, heterogeneous, and impersonal rivals—one high school against another, not one ethnic group against another.

Can all this explain why Southern California is so different, politically, from Northern California—why it, so much more than the Bay Area, supported Goldwater and Reagan? Perhaps not entirely. And yet I believe the kind of people living there and their life-styles are very important, much more important than, say, the presumed influence of the conservative Los Angeles *Times*. The Oakland *Tribune* is even more conservative, but the East Bay region it serves is more "liberal" in its voting than L.A. And the very liberal McClatchey newspapers in the Central Valley do not seem to have turned back the Reagan tide. On the other hand, San Francisco has Southern-California-style suburbs as well, with bungalows and cars and the like, and the people there are not as conservative as their counterparts in the South. But as we have seen, the people who migrated to San Francisco in the 30's and 40's were different from those who settled in Los Angeles. And once the different life-styles of the two cities became apparent, non-Californians must have begun deciding to move to the Bay Area or to Los Angeles on the basis, in part, of what they had heard about those styles. A small but visible difference in the beginning thus became a very large difference in the end.

II

THE POLITICAL institutions and economic character of Southern California reinforced the life style and gave it expression. Politics, as I have said, was nonpartisan, free-swinging, slightly populistic—a direct appeal to the people was to be made on all issues. The major parties for decades were virtually moribund and therefore never performed their customary (and to my thinking, desirable) task of aggregating interests, blurring issues, strengthening party loyalties, and finding moderate candidates. Not that the people wanted immoderate candidates. So long, at least, as the issues were not very grave—before civil rights, and welfare, and Berkeley, and crime—they wanted honest, competent administrators who favored change but in an orderly manner. In Earl Warren they got such a man and he made sure the regular Republican party, whose fat cats were on the whole considerably to his Right, would not have a chance to replace him. He built a personal following outside the regular, and cumbersome, party apparatus. Like most personal followings, however, it made no provision for a transfer of power. The obvious Warren protégé—Thomas Kuchel—was in the Senate, Warren's personal following in the state could not be handed to another man, and the party was in no shape to find a candidate of its own. Any man with money and a good smile could take a crack at capturing the nomination on his own, and many did.

Such organization as existed tended to be in the North, rather than the South. San Francisco and Alameda County across the bay had more in

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the way of party machinery, financed on a steady basis, than the South had, at least until the emergence of the California Democratic clubs. A little organization goes a long way in an organizational vacuum, and the North exercised a disproportionate influence in California politics for some time. The Northern Democrats had some old families—many Jewish—who helped pay the party's bills during the long, lean years.

The South had few such persons—or more accurately, it had some very rich, self-made men from the oil business and from the vast agricultural enterprises of the Imperial Valley who were conservative Democrats in the (by now) well-documented tradition of the American Southwest. They may be more visible in Texas today, but twenty years ago they were more influential in California.

Why? There were Jews in Southern California, tens of thousands of them in and around Los Angeles. (Yet looking back on my high-school days, I can think of only one Jew I was personally acquainted with, and he went to another high school across town. Jews were Hollywood, we all knew.) Many of them were in the movie industry and in command of wealth and great resources for publicity. Why didn't they help to finance and lead the Southern California Democratic party? Some did—or tried—at least for a while. A high point of that influence was the 1950 senatorial campaign of the liberal Helen Gahagan Douglas, the movie actress. It wasn't George Murphy or Ronald Reagan who put Hollywood into politics, it was Mrs. Douglas, who lost to Richard Nixon. Two years before, many of her supporters had turned, in frustration, to third-party politics and become important figures in the 1948 campaign of Henry Wallace. It was a disaster. Bolting the party nationally was a far more serious thing than bolting it locally, where it could hardly be said to exist. The Truman Democrats took control in California and, when Communist party influence in the Wallace movement became too obvious to be denied (Wallace himself was to admit it later), they were in a position to treat the Douglas and Wallace Democrats as thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the voters. Shortly thereafter, the era of McCarthyism descended upon the country, and in Hollywood involvement in politics was for the time being finished. What Mrs. Douglas had begun, Henry Wallace and Joe McCarthy succeeded in ending.

But it was not only that Hollywood Jews had lost power, it was also that Hollywood Jews were different from those in other urban centers. The social and economic heights of Hollywood were commanded, not by German Jews, but by East Europeans; not by old families but by immigrants; not by Wall Street smoothness but by *nouveau riche* entrepreneurship. Such Hollywood money as went into politics was used much as money was then used in the movie industry—impulsively, by dictatorial men used to having their own way, and on behalf of "stars." If the star system worked on the movie lots, why couldn't it work in politics? Thus, a glamorous figure, a big name, and occasionally a conspicuous nut could get *personal* backing for a campaign, but there was little or no money for organization, for routine affairs, or for professional (and necessarily bureaucratic) leadership.

Anyway, the voter wasn't much interested in liberalism even if it could be financed. Los Angeles was prosperous, and even greater prosperity seemed just around the corner. The aircraft plants and shipyards had taken tens of thousands of families and given every member, including the mother, a job, thereby putting them, in four years' time, in a wholly different and higher economic bracket. A generation of slow gain was compressed into a few years; progress wasn't around the corner, or something you hoped for for your kids, it was right here and now. War prosperity affected the whole country, but it had a special effect on Southern California—there was more of it, because there was more war industry located there, and it benefited people who only a few years before had been fighting for survival on a dust-swept farm in the Texas panhandle. John Steinbeck has told us how those farmers and sharecroppers saw California as the Promised Land. But they had only been promised relief checks from the Farm Security Administration; instead, they found overtime checks from Lockheed.

NEXT TO THE kind of people who live there, the rate of economic growth of Southern California—and today, of the whole Southwest—is the main key to its political life. Visiting scholars make much of the business domination of Dallas, or the presumed influence of the Los Angeles *Times* in Southern California, or the "Chamber of Commerce mentality" of San Diego. The important thing to understand is that these have not been alien influences imposed from above on the populace—they are merely the more obvious indicators of the fact that business values are widely shared. (Not business *control*; voters are as quick to resent that, when it is pointed out to them, in Los Angeles as anywhere. Sam Yorty became mayor by running against the *Times* and other "downtown interests," and he is still very popular in his city, however much ridicule he may take from Robert Kennedy in Washington.) Business values are here meant in the widest sense—a desire for expansion and growth, a high rate of increase in property values, finding and developing mass markets, and keeping capital moving and labor productive.

No one was immune from this psychology. How could he be? Everyone was buying, or intended to buy, his own home. Many factory workers and salesmen speculated in real estate on the side. A

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favorite topic of conversation at our dinner table, and I am sure at thousands of dinner tables just like it, was the latest story about the fantastic price a certain parcel had just been sold for and what a shame it was that we passed up the chance to buy it two years ago for peanuts. (We never seemed to have enough peanuts around at the right time.) The purpose of government was to facilitate this growth—open up new land, bring in water, make credit easy, keep the defense plants rolling. Government was not there to keep painfully-acquired positions secure by paying out benefits or legislating new regulations. Government was there to help bring in the future, not protect the past.

Not everyone felt this way, of course. Elderly people who came to California to retire had a different view. They wanted pensions, benefits, regulations. They were numerous and visible, but though they come quickly to mind when one thinks back on the shuffleboard and croquet courts at Lincoln Park in Long Beach or on the soapbox orators and bench-sitters in Pershing Square in Los Angeles, they were never representative of the local political ethos. They were the butt of countless jokes and the target for much political criticism: they wanted to hold back tomorrow (it was believed), cash their relief checks, and lie in the sun. That was *wrong*, most working families thought. The Negro, who today is the victim of the anti-welfare sentiment, was actually the second victim; the first was the old folks. They were attacked for moving to California "just to get a pension," told to "go back where they came from," and fought against in countless welfare issues. (About the only thing they were spared were allegations that they constituted a sexual threat. I cannot recall my father, no paragon of tolerance, ever trying to clinch an argument against a liberal by asking him how he would like it if his daughter grew up and married an old man.)

The old folks fought back, but in California it was a *protest* movement. George McLain organized the old folks (nobody ever called them "senior citizens"; they didn't even call themselves that) and made them a potent force in state politics, but it was a force directed *against* the two major parties and their candidates. He won concessions for his followers and now they may be so secure as to be accepted as a political fact of life; what they wanted, however, was never accepted.

Southern California's political culture, including but not limited to what might be called Reaganism, is one which I suspect is characteristic of areas experiencing rapid economic growth and general prosperity, especially if there are few institutions—political parties, churches, labor unions—to frame the issues and blunt popular instincts. People there are concerned about the growth in the size of the economic pie, not (except for the elderly) in preserving the size of their present slice. The attributes in a person to be admired are those which indicate his ability to enhance his position and expand his resources, not conserve his position and maintain his resources. If I had to cite only one way in which Southwestern politics differ from Northeastern politics, it would be this: the former region is developmental, future-oriented, and growth-conscious; the latter is conserving, past- or present-oriented, and security-conscious. Note that I say "conserving," not conservative; there is a difference. The Northeast by some measures is less "conservative" than the Southwest, though it is easy to exaggerate the difference. A conserva*tive* is usually thought of as a person who favors limited government, minimized administrative involvement in private affairs, maximum free choice. A conser*ver*, on the other hand, needs *more* government in order to protect present stakes from change, from threats posed by other groups, and from competition.

Before we get carried away with the difference, some qualifications are in order. There are conserving forces at work in Southern California. One is the elderly. Another is the slowly emerging labor movement. For years Los Angeles was a tough city in which to be a trade unionist. There are still people who remember with horror the bombing of the Los Angeles *Times*. But unions are making headway. One is the Retail Clerks, which is organizing in the supermarkets and dime stores; another is the Machinists, active in aircraft and auto assembly plants. And the region's economic growth has not unleashed anything like the hysteria of the Florida land boom.

EVEN MORE important as a challenge to the general political culture of the region, with its concern for property, propriety, individual responsibility, economic growth, and limited government, is ideological liberalism. By the time McCarthyism was ending and the blacklists were beginning to lose their grip on Hollywood (perhaps because faced with the competition from television and European producers, Hollywood could no longer afford the luxury of a blacklist), Adlai Stevenson was making his appearance as a force in the Democratic party. The enormous outpouring of support for him in Southern California has been oft remarked upon, as has the vigorous club movement that grew up in the aftermath of his 1952 and 1956 Presidential campaigns. The movement activated a wholly new generation of political enthusiasts and provided a new base of operations for some of the leftovers from older forms of liberal and radical politics.

These clubs did not recruit the people I have been describing in earlier pages, nor have they taken hold in the areas in which these people live. The clubs grew up on the northern and eastern periphery of the region—the Hollywood hills, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Pacific Palisades, and out into the college towns, such as Pomona,

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in the interior. Young Jews, young intellectuals, persons transplanted to Los Angeles from the East (by 1940, about 10 per cent of the population had been born in New England, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania), and older California radicals flocked into the clubs. But the clubs never really took root among the working-class and middle-class bungalows of Long Beach, Inglewood, or Redondo Beach, to say nothing of Orange County to the Southeast. The Democratic clubs initially had little interest in Southern California; they were interested in national and international issues. (The civil-rights movement has changed that; the clubs are now deeply involved in such matters locally.) They had, at the outset, no real program for California (though they had one for just about everything else), and thus there was no necessary conflict between what they wanted and what those who later voted for Reagan wanted—no necessary conflict, perhaps, but conflict nonetheless. And the most intense kind of conflict, for what was at stake were large and symbolic issues—Red China, capital punishment, world peace, and civil liberties. The Southern California electorate quickly became deeply polarized.

The polarization is not immediately evident in voting statistics. In the aggregate, Southern California elects a mixture of liberals and conservatives much like any other region, and on many of its famous referenda votes for and against public expenditures about like other areas. But these aggregate figures conceal the real symptoms of polarization—several Democrats (not all) are as far to the Left of their party as is possible; several Republicans (not all) are as far to the Right of their party as possible. And on referenda issues—especially those involving such matters as open occupancy in housing—the returns and the polls suggest that Southern California has both the most intense proponents and the most intense opponents (the latter outnumbering the former: the region as a whole was against fair housing by a considerable margin; in San Francisco, the vote was both less lopsided and, I suspect, based on less intensely polarized views). This is *not* the same thing as saying that Southern California is more "bigoted" than the Bay Area. Because of the way the issue was framed, people were asked to vote *for* the *right* to sell their property to whomever they chose. In Southern California, property rights are vital and freedom in their exercise staunchly defended. There have been, I would guess, fewer attacks on Negro families seeking homes in white neighborhoods in Southern California than in, say, Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Illinois. The housing issue was fought out at a more general level—not over whether one was for or against Negroes, but over alternative conceptions of what freedom requires. And the polarization of opinion on this issue, as on most, was most intense among persons of higher status. The educated, affluent Easterners and intellectuals (who work in law firms or the communications media or the universities) are more inclined than their less well-off fellows to support the Democratic clubs and liberalism; the educated, affluent sons and daughters of the Midwestern migrants (who now work as engineers and accountants in aerospace and petroleum industries) are more inclined than their less well-off fellows to support Goldwater and Reagan.

III

Is Southern California's political culture unique? Not really—it is but the earliest, most publicized, and most heavily populated example of a pattern now to be found throughout much of the Southwest. It appeared first in Southern California because more people went there and because California's political institutions gave almost immediate expression to it. In other states, the party structure constrained its free expression for a time; the ambitions of rival politicians and factions in Texas and Arizona made the ideology less evident, at least for a while. Goldwater's easy victory at the 1964 Republican convention indicates how widespread are certain aspects of that culture—in fact, it overstates it, because Goldwater himself overstated many features of that culture. The Southern Californians about whom I have written want limited government, personal responsibility, "basic" education, a resurgence of patriotism, an end to "chiseling," and a more restrained Supreme Court. They are not quite so certain that they want an adventurous foreign policy or a high-risk international confrontation with Communism. No doubt the militant Goldwater enthusiasts wanted such a policy, but they must have mistaken what the rank-and-file would support. Reagan has not yet made the same mistake—he took Goldwater's views, stripped away the foreign policy (except for very general statements) and references to turning back the clock on Social Security (after all, he wanted a coalition between the elderly and the young).

But Goldwater, however badly-managed his campaign, won the convention and won it by methods and with supporters which, in whatever state they were found, could very easily have been found in Southern California. Amateur political clubs, impassioned volunteers, appeals to highly moral and symbolic issues—the Republican party professionals had, to their profound irritation, to put up with all of it, just as party professionals in California, Democrats and Republicans alike, have been putting up with it since the early 1950's.

The Southern California political style is spreading; it seems to be, at least in the Western part of the United States, the concomitant of the American success story. There, millions of people are realizing their ambitions. They are not "root-

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less" or yearning for "small-town simplicity" or profoundly irritated by all the hustle and bustle; they are acquiring security, education, living space, and a life style that is based in its day-to-day routine on gentility, courtesy, hospitality, virtue. Why, then, are they so discontent? It is not with their lot that they are discontent, it is with the lot of the nation. *The very virtues they have and practice are, in their eyes, conspicuously absent from society as a whole.* Politics is corrupt—not in the petty sense, though there is that—but in the large sense; to these people, it consists of "deals," of the catering to selfish interests, of cynical manipulation and doubletalk. The universities are corrupt—children don't act as if they appreciate what is being given them, they don't work hard, and they are lectured to by devious and wrongheaded professors. And above all, everywhere they look, somebody is trying to get "something for nothing," and succeeding.

These views may not be confined only to the political culture in which they are now articulated. Surveys I have taken, and others I have read, indicate that the single most widespread concern of middle-class Americans is over the "decay of values"—evidenced by "crime in the streets," juvenile delinquency, public lewdness, and the like, but going much beyond these manifestations to include everything that suggests that people no longer act in accordance with decent values and right reason. In many places, especially in the Northeast, our political institutions (happily) do not allow such views to play much part in elections. Parties, led by professionals, instinctively shun such issues, feeling somehow that public debate over virtue is irrelevant (what can government do about it?) and dangerous (nobody can agree on what virtue is or that your party has more of it). Powerful non-political institutions tend, also, to keep such issues out of politics or to insist that they be matters of private conscience. For one, the Catholic Church, which draws the religious and moral interests of its followers inward, toward the sacraments and the educational and religious facilities of the Church which must be maintained and served. For another, large labor unions which have never mistaken a "stamp out smut" campaign for a fifty-cent increase in the minimum wage. And a self-conscious intelligentsia with common ties to prestigious centers of liberal-arts education has, in many regions, especially the East and the Bay Area, an important role to play among local elites. They use their access to the mass media and to officialdom to make certain that other, non-moral issues predominate—after all, the major function of the schools they went to was to induce them to rebel against the "middle-class morality" which, in the modern parlance, is a hangup.

Regional differences will never disappear entirely, and thus the political culture of Southern California will never be *the* political culture of our society. But the strength of all those institutions which resist it is waning, and thus we are likely to have more of it in more places in the future. I happen to think that morality is important and that those concerned about it are decent people (after all, I'm related to a sizable number of them). But I fear for the time when politics is seized with the issue. Our system of government cannot handle matters of that sort (can any democratic system?) and it may be torn apart by the effort.

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EXODUS AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THE fundamental assumption of virtually all serious modern students of the Jewish Bible is that it ought to be treated as a historical document, valuable for the light it casts on the development of Israel as a nation and as a religion. The first higher critics showed that before the Bible could cast any true light at all, it had to be broken down into its component texts. These, when analyzed, yielded a history of the Jewish people radically different from the one which the Bible seemed to tell when read naively. Recent critics use archaeological as well as textual evidence to confirm rather than to deny the "essential historicity" of the Bible's own story. The late editor of the Anchor *Genesis*, for example, argued that everything we now know about Abraham's period "enhances the probability of Abraham as a historical figure." But Professor Speiser would have been the last to disagree with the assumption that has governed so much biblical criticism in the modern age—that we should use the Bible to find out "what the events in Hebrew history actually were."

As a lay reader of the Bible, I cannot share this assumption. It asks me to agree that the Bible is important because without it the modern historian would be handicapped in his task of reconstructing the life of ancient Israel. I prefer an assumption which, rather than pointing to the creative role of the modern historian, affirms that of the Bible itself: without the Bible there would have been no Israel for the historian to reconstruct. The Bible not only told the people their history, it also nerved them to endure it. It was a repository not of fact, but of motive. It was a creative force within the history we study, insensibly forming the very objects of our study, and it needs to be understood as such—as an agency, not as a document. As a document it can only be correlated with some external order of fact and experience. As an agency it is a fact and a field of experience in its own right.

What kind of experience? I would say, an autobiographical experience. We do not read a great autobiography in order to find out what a man was "actually." We read it in order to know what he conceived himself to be, for an autobiography is our closest literary approximation to the most sublime act of which man is capable—the act by which he comes to know, and in knowing create, himself. The self known and made may not have existed prior to the autobiographical act, but it surely exists ever afterward. The same is true of the Bible. It is a people's description of itself, a national autobiography, in which a people investigates, affirms, and perpetuates its own complex identity. The exodus from Egypt may or may not have happened. If it happened, it may or may not have happened in the manner described. But what cannot be gainsaid is that over a period of many centuries a people differentiated itself from other peoples and achieved an identity in its own eyes by telling itself that it had been liberated from Egypt by God. Not the event, but the telling of the event is what matters. Not the event that can be corroborated, but the event that *is* the telling of the event—and therefore neither needs nor bears corroboration—is what should concern us insofar as our interest in the Bible is other than that of the professional historian.

COMING ON the Book of Exodus, the historian asks, "Was the people described in Exodus as emigrating from Egypt to Canaan 'really' of the same stock as the people described in Genesis as emigrating from Canaan to Egypt?" Whatever his answer, it will involve the construction of a second, non-biblical Israel, one existing, as it were, "behind" the text, and only partly and accidentally dependent on the text for its interest and value. Conceived as history, the biblical text becomes only the most important of the several windows through which we can spy the "real" Israel. Conceived as autobiography, the text becomes a mirror, not a window, to be looked at, not through. In Exodus as in Genesis, the autobiographical argument would say, a people is looking at itself. And it is looking at itself not as it "was" at any given and limited moment in its "past" but as—at any given present moment—it "is." The image, to be sure, is composed of memories. But these memories have been made to do the work which "ideas" might have done in another civilization: they are meant to define permanent reali-

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ties. Abraham, from this point of view, is not only the first Israelite, he is also the essential Israelite, a separate incarnation of the whole, and spiritually contemporaneous with all the other self-incarnations which the Bible has to offer, including Moses and the "people" as described in Exodus. The relation between Genesis and Exodus is thus not only between two sets of memories arranged in chronological sequence but also between two different modes of autobiographical statement, two different ways of defining the same self; neither way is necessarily anterior to the other. In Genesis, Israel encounters itself in the form of persons—patriarchs. In Exodus it encounters itself in the form of a people as well as in that of a person—Moses.

Genesis is about first beginnings. It is a story of many births: the earth's, man's, Israel's. Each birth involves a separation—of the earth from the void, of man from the earth, and of Israel from man. These births relate to each other, moreover, not as phases of a natural process, but as separate events in a discontinuous series, each having the value of a reenactment of the first. Israel does not simply evolve from Abraham's kin in Haran. It breaks off sharply from these tribal origins, and at the instance of the same creative energy which, in an earlier chapter, separated the light from the darkness.

Nor, once Abraham is separated from his kin in Haran, and from Lot, does the further history of Israel follow as a natural process. As each of Abraham's patriarchal descendants separately receives the covenant, so each is separately created *ex nihilo*—out of the dramatized barrenness of his mother, out of a human void. Furthermore, none of the patriarchs merely inherits his father's power. Each first supplants and separates himself from an older, better-endowed brother or brothers. Thus, each is in a sense twice-born, once biologically, when he is separated from his mother in conditions implying a revocation of the laws of reproduction, and again culturally, when he is separated from his brother or brothers in conditions implying a revocation of the laws of inheritance. Each, *qua* patriarch, constitutes a wholly new beginning, and the genealogy that each supports comes to seem nothing but a series of new beginnings, fresh creative moments, enabling Israel to know itself as the nation indebted not to nature or to sex, but directly to God, for its continued existence.

WHAT THEN OF Exodus? Is Exodus not also a tale of new beginnings? For the biological birth of the patriarch in barrenness we have the saga of the people's first genesis in Egypt, the reiterated report of births obtained in the face of obstacles at least as discouraging as barrenness. "They are vigorous," say the midwives, "and are delivered before the midwife comes." For the second or cultural birth, we have the violent tearing of the people from the side of Egypt, its "deliverance" from "the Sea of Reeds," which is a parturition of another kind, leading to the most significant of all of Israel's new beginnings, its spiritual birth in the barrenness of the desert, from which, like Jacob, it was to emerge as the supplanter of its older, better-endowed brothers in Canaan. In Exodus, as in Genesis, the essential drama is the same. It is the drama of becoming what one is, the drama of reenacting one's own birth.

The connection between the exodus and Passover brings out this theme even more clearly. The Passover celebrates a new beginning. On the Passover Israel sacrifices "all that first opens [i.e., separates itself from] the womb," redeeming its own first-born by sacrificing the first-born of the cattle. On this holiday Israel also refuses to eat bread that contains anything from the previous year's harvest—i.e., any bread that has been leavened. We are told by Roland De Vaux that the original purpose of both rites, the one nomadic, the other agricultural, was to honor the spring and secure fecundity in the coming year. Thus, even in temporary abstraction from the biblical text, the Passover celebrates a new beginning—the spring—dramatized as a separation. The biblical text turns both rites into historical mnemonics. The sacrifice of the first-born reminds Israel of the last plague, and the eating of the unleavened bread reminds it of its hasty departure. But there is, of course, a deeper, plainly poetic connection between the rites and the event they commemorate. The exodus was history's springtime, when Israel itself, like a newborn lamb, was "thrust out of Egypt," "brought forth" into a new existence, its future fecundity assured on condition of its readiness to dissociate itself from its immediate past. The new beginning that Israel commemorates on the Passover is its own, when like a child it "cried out for help," and when the Lord, like a father, came to its aid: "Israel," Yahweh tells Moses, "is *my* first-born son."

Indeed, it is not even sufficient to say that the Passover commemorates Israel's first beginning as a people. In itself, the Passover *is* a new beginning, a time for the community as a whole to renew its identity as Israel—not merely by "remembering" the exodus but by actually undergoing it. On the festival of Passover the community is specifically enjoined to forget time-differences, return to the Egyptian womb, stay awake through the suspenseful night of its birth, feel God's destructive angel passing overhead, and in all ways ready itself—"your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand"—for hasty departure. To perform this drama is, quite literally, to be born again as oneself, to become what one is, or should be. For what does it mean to be Israel except to be ready to separate, to venture into an unknown land and time, with God alone as steersmate, and with no identity save that of God's conscious creature? It was because he dis-

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played such readiness that Abram became Abraham, and Jacob became Israel. One might say, in fact, that there was no subsequent age when such readiness did not have to be displayed again—for there would never be an age when Israel would not, as in the Book of Exodus, need to "depart" from the alien peoples among whom it would find itself living.

But, as Yeats has said, no man is "himself" for more than a moment at a time. The historical community of Israel was almost never wholly itself—wholly separate, wholly the creature of its God. That is why it needed the Passover and all the other rites by which it could recover an identity always in jeopardy, always in need of being redefined. From Abraham through Moses to the prophets there is no lack of exemplary figures capable of saying, "Here am I!" But these figures represent an attitude to which the community aspires, not one which it ever quite achieves. In the 8th century, as the nation's prophets were preparing it for a second entry into the "wilderness," Hosea rebuked Israel as "an unwise son"—"The pangs of childbirth come for him," but "he does not present himself at the mouth of the womb." The Book of Exodus shows that Hosea's rebuke was always in order. Like Genesis, Exodus personifies Israel in an ideal state of readiness (Moses), but it also, unlike Genesis, represents it in an actual state of unreadiness (the people). That is why as autobiography Exodus is perhaps more interesting than Genesis. In it the nation's best self wrestles with its worst self. In it the birth of the nation takes place as what in fact it always was—a traumatic struggle between its prophetic and regressive elements.

THIS DIFFERENCE between Genesis and Exodus is best seen in the life of Moses, who is both patriarch and prophet, God's willing creature and the instrument by which an unwilling nation is dragged into its life. Like the patriarchs, Moses is twice-born, once upon his deliverance from the Nile, and again when, like Jacob, he flees from a man who "sought to kill" him. As in Jacob's case, these twin events are preludes to twin births of another kind, taking place in solitude, and preceding his return to the community. What Bethel is to Jacob, Horeb is to Moses—the theater for a rebirth in consciousness, for a coming-into-awareness of the holiness of one's creator. Then, later, at "a lodging place by the way," as at Penuel, the Creator attacks His creature (a divine enemy thus replacing the earlier human one—"The Lord met him and sought to kill him"); and the creature, as a result, comes into awareness of his own holiness—he has met God face to face—and lived. Moses, like Jacob, foreshadows the history of his people, who will become conscious of God's holiness and then of their own after fleeing into the wilderness from the land of their miraculous first birth. Unlike Jacob, however, Moses assists at the births which his own career foreshadows. He is the creature as co-creator, the midwife; almost every detail which is peculiar to his life, in a manner not reminiscent of Genesis, gives him to us in this capacity.

Thus, whereas Jacob is delivered from barrenness, Moses, the future drawer-forth of the people from "the Sea of Reeds," is himself "drawn forth" from the Nile. Whereas Jacob struggles against his brother for a personal birthright, Moses struggles against his foster-brother, "the Egyptian," in order to deliver "a Hebrew" from oppression. Even the pastoral idyll of his arrival in Midian, which seems at first to recall the betrothal of Rebecca, shows him in his essential role as the one who draws things forth. "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds," say Reuel's daughters, "and even drew water for us and watered the flock." It is perhaps too much to say that when God calls to Moses from the fire we hear an echo of Pharoah's daughter's words—"Moses! Moses!"; "I drew him out! I drew him out!"—but there can be no doubt that the language of God's ensuing personal covenant identifies Moses as a midwife: "Come, I will send you to Pharoah that you may bring forth my people." In every sense of the word, Moses is his people's *deliverer*: the events which follow his return to Egypt only tell us what it truly means to be a people's deliverer.

It means overcoming the resistance of child and mother alike. Like many another human mother, Egypt does not wish to "let go" the children who have come into existence within her, even though not letting them go is equivalent to letting them die. Therefore she must be made to let them go; they must become intolerable to her; she must eject them. "Get away from me," says Pharaoh to Moses in disgust, "take heed to yourself; never see my face again." The plagues which Moses inflicts on Egypt are the birth-pangs of Israel's natural parent, recording the violence and the suffering that must accompany the separation of one culture from another. Israel, meanwhile, as Moses says to it on the border of the sea, has "only to be still." But to be still, in this case, means to be transported, and the Israel that wrote Exodus knew itself too well to imagine that it could ever have suffered transport willingly. "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt," the people complain, "that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?" In Canaan Israel would resist the efforts of its leaders to return it to a desert faith. Here in Egypt it resists the efforts of Moses even to introduce it to such a faith. It does not want to be itself; it never would. It does not want to enter the wilderness that symbolizes the loneliness of its life with a God in whom other nations do not believe; it never would. That, nevertheless, it does enter the wilderness, bawling and kicking, it knows it owes not to its own nature but to Moses, who frees it against its will from the culture in

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which it came to life and to which it felt itself bound by natural human ties. So in later periods there would arise prophets capable of freeing Israel from the cultures to which it was variously indebted, and of "returning" it to Sinai as a locus of inspiration peculiar to itself. The two processes are strictly parallel; each is a liberation, each a bringing-forth; perhaps, indeed, at the deepest level, to bring forth Israel is only to force it to comprehend the conditions by which alone it can preserve its individuality; perhaps also, then, Exodus conceived as autobiography is only Israel's expression of its permanent indebtedness to the prophets who, like Moses, told it that the life it did not want to lead was the only life it could.

THE WILDERNESS bears a curious resemblance to some of the institutions which the nation was to derive from its experience there. These institutions, in turn, bear a strange resemblance to the nation itself (they are virtually metaphors for it), so that it almost comes to seem that the "landscape" in which Israel travels *is* Israel. The wilderness resembles the Sabbath, first of all, for it constitutes what the French anthropologist, Arnold Van Gennep, calls *une zone de marge*, a kind of no-man's land suspended between past and future, man and God. It also resembles the tabernacle or the temple, for it is a place peculiarly the nation's own, secure from profane eyes, curtained off by bodies of water as the tabernacle (described in Exodus itself) is curtained off by "fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff." At the hidden moral center of the tabernacle, concealed by another curtain from the lampstand and altar standing in its forecourt, lies the ark, which is God's throne and the vessel containing His law. And at the hidden moral center of the wilderness, relating to it precisely as the ark relates to the tabernacles, lies the summit of Sinai, concealed from the people huddled at the altar below by a curtain of fire; the summit of Sinai is also God's throne, and it is from there that He delivers the law. The tabernacle is a portable wilderness, the temple a permanent one. The ark is a continuous Sinai. Only the high priest may approach the ark. Only Moses may ascend Sinai. Each in its way represents the sacred center of the nation, curtained off even from its own understanding, yet conceived as the source of the law which is its life and the fire which is its nerve. If, as the very possibility of national autobiography suggests, Israel may be compared to a person, does it not follow that Sinai and the ark may be compared to the mythical seat of a man's soul, and God to the soul itself, which in all useful mythologies and psychologies is always *other* than the person, though residing *within* him? The wilderness would then be comparable to the outer environs of a person, to his very flesh, beyond which the eye of the stranger may not penetrate, and within which it is always a journey of initiation to travel. That, finally, is how I think the journey to Sinai ought to be explained—as the autobiographical record of a journey of initiation taking place within the self, like that journey of initiation which is every profound act of prayer. The journey begins when Israel crosses the Sea of Reeds—a frontier separating it from the human community at large. It will end in the Book of Joshua when it crosses the Jordan—a frontier connecting it again with the larger human community. But it comes to its climax at a frontier of a different kind, the "vertical" frontier of Sinai, which may not be crossed, for it is where the self can just dimly connect with that which is not the self—its soul, its inspiration, its God.

I have been using the word "initiation" designedly, recognizing that it is interchangeable with the word "birth" (a birth is an initiation from one kind of life to another, and an initiation is the birth of a new man out of the old), but reserving it for the events at Sinai so as to discriminate Sinai's special relation to the births preceding it. The crossing of the Sea confers identity on Israel and admits it to a holy landscape. But until Sinai, the people remains only unconsciously and involuntarily itself, estranged from the land it inhabits and a spiritual resident of the land from which it has been estranged, "murmuring" against Moses and protesting the special conditions of its life. After Sinai it will relapse into unconsciousness and disobedience, but no longer, as before, with impunity, for like a child initiated into its father's cult, Israel has been bound to the law, made responsible for its acts.

Nor is it simply in this legalistic sense that Sinai constitutes an initiation. It is also an initiation into insight. Fire as well as law pours from Sinai, and fire is the essential vesture of the Jewish soul, conveying its essential attribute, which is the attribute that fire shares with the name of God ("I am that I am")—ungraspable reality. The hand cannot grasp fire, and the mind cannot grasp the meaning of God's name, and it is just this inability to grasp what one knows at the same time to be real—it is just this failure of consciousness that makes for the consciousness we think of as specially Israel's: the consciousness that the source of one's life is an inappropriable reality, to be feared and served, but not to be manipulated. To know this is to know what the prophets knew. It is to be Israel incarnate. Exodus records the "first" communal effort to apprehend this truth, which is why we call what happens at Sinai an initiation: to this event, as to an initiation, Israel will look back in order to account for whatever consciousness it has. And to this event it will in fact return—in quest of consciousness—whenever it repairs to the temple or to the Book of Exodus itself.

When at the altar before Sinai Israel swears fidelity to the content of its experience there—

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"All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient"—the reader finds himself at one of the rare moments in human experience when the personality is at one with its deepest convictions. But insight, like beauty, "holds in perfection but a little moment." The biblical autobiography would cease to mirror Israel if the initiation at Sinai concluded before introducing the nation to the full range of its future response; including not only its capacity for insight but also its capacity for betrayal, and finally its capacity for continued life in the face of the knowledge of betrayal. If the essential condition of Israel is to be able to say, "Here am I," to a life force, a *daemon* one can neither see nor grasp, its existential condition is to know itself incapable of enduring for more than a prophetic moment the terrible suspense of a life lived without the support of what are called "idols"—graspable, determinate forms, such as the forms that art makes out of nature. Idols, after all, are a psychological, a human necessity, even if for Israel, that human state grasped by an inhuman fate, they also betoken the death which is assimilation into the rest of humankind. Israel cannot *not* worship them. If it did refrain from worshipping them, if it did remain true to itself, it would falsify everything we know about its behavior. The only real question is, "What next?," *after* betrayal. It is this question that Exodus constructs an answer to as it prepares to ease the communities of reader and subject back into relation with the children of Adam.

In a gesture at once regressive and predictive, the people contributes the gold that it took from Egypt to an image foreshadowing the Baals it would worship in Canaan. Moses has "delayed to come down from the mountain," and the people are unable to abide his temporary absence in view of the permanent absence from their lives of a graspable god. To make up for the loss of the one, they invent the other, as they would do again later, after Moses had left them to their own devices in Canaan. God responds as He must, given the conditions of the "covenant," given also the ultimate importance to Israel of the prophetic experience that has been betrayed. "I have seen this people," He says, speaking in the accents of prophecy, "and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation." The point that the autobiography is making in the voice of its God is that a people untrue to itself has no right to live, and that if it remained permanently in the condition shown, it couldn't live. We are here at the quick of the biblical autobiography, the point of ultimate contradiction between insight and behavior, between Israel's prophetic and actual modes. Why should not insight, prophecy, Moses alone survive? What need is there at all for a human vessel? "Of you will I make a great nation." Indeed, were it not for the humane institution of sacrifice, Israel would not have been able to survive this contradiction, nor the load of guilt which insight must inevitably pile up when confronted, as here, with behavior. For by sacrifice alone can man apologize to what he has come from for what he is, and will continue to be. Sacrifice is our only means of reconciling fact to truth, and not the least important work of Exodus is, as it were, to invent, or construct sacrifice as such a means. Moses assuages the "devouring fire" of God's anger, then, significantly, takes God's anger upon himself (*his* "anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them . . ., took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it upon the waters, and made the people of Israel drink it"); then, even more significantly, he transfers his anger to the priests, "the sons of Levi," who initiate themselves to the service of the Lord "each one at the cost of his son and brother." This violence of self-mutilation, in which Israel executes God's anger upon itself, playing God to its own Pharaoh, is the last of the separations which Exodus records, a separation of the self from the self, a sacrifice of that which is alien to the self within the self, in token of one's fierce intention to be true. The rhythm of the spiritual life is thus established—insight or vow, violation, guilt, sacrifice. And the rhythm is more important even than the insight, because the rhythm indicates a means for the recovery of the insight.

BUT THIS rhythm, which is nothing less than the *life* of Israel, its essential motion, is not yet complete. It has not yet reached the point at which it can begin again, and assume the ever new forms that it will find in the other chapters of the biblical autobiography. Still to come is a series of beautiful gestures whereby the body discovers its value to the soul, the actual nation its dearness to its own prophetic part.

For this series of gestures "grace" would be too imprecise a term did the gestures not define grace for us as the God-given power to bear the presence of God's power—to bear it both in the sense of "carry" (as the ark is carried) and in the sense of "endure." In response to Moses's plea for a confirming sign of presence ("Is it not in thy going with us, so that we are distinct, I and thy people, from all other people that are upon the face of the earth?"), God uses His power to shield Moses from its effect: "while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by." Then, when the tables have been cut a second time, and Moses has descended a second time from Sinai, it appears that what God had been to Moses, Moses himself has become for the people—a radiance self-veiled, so as not to destroy that which it honors and animates with its presence. "The people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of

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Moses's face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with [God]." Finally, as the book closes, and the journey beyond Sinai is about to begin, the tabernacle becomes for the future what God had been for Moses, and Moses for the community of the desert—again, a radiance that has suffered itself to be borne. "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

IN EACH OF these gestures Israel is given to itself as something human involved with something holy—touched (Moses in the cleft of the rock), visited (Moses descending Sinai, his face shining), or inhabited and led (the tabernacle) by a holy fire. The fire is as inappropriable as ever. But in these gestures there is a new sense in which the fire seems tenderly respectful of its container, almost as if it were afraid of hurting it. The fire of God is Israel's inspiration, without which it would be nothing. The reverse is not true: without poets there would still be such a thing as inspiration, and without Israel there would still be such a thing as God. That, at least, is the profound belief of both creative parties. But without poets, how would we express inspiration, and without Israel how would God have communicated Himself? For the sake of the nation which is His human vessel, God suffers Himself to be contained within the face of Moses, within the tabernacles, within the people, and within the Bible itself, which is the autobiography of His poet, recording here, as a final insight, its own value to its own source. If the poet did not know that his inspiration needed him, how could he endure the long and sordid history of his failure to respond to it adequately? And if Israel did not know the secret that these last gestures record, how could it have endured the shame of its own history, which is also, as Exodus shows, the history of a failure to respond adequately?

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JOSEPH J. WEISS

VIETNAM—A DOCTOR'S JOURNAL

"War is like a whore. If you pay the price, you can indulge in your whims and perversities."
—Colonel D., ARVN/Camau

An Xuyen

IT IS SEPTEMBER, the middle of the rainy season, and the land of An Xuyen is half submerged and completely green. The rice shoots rise a foot above the flooded paddies, and in any abandoned spot there is jungle growth, thick shrubs, and long coarse grass. Day and night, rain falls from green to ground and trickles into channels which crisscross the land like capillaries. A sluggish current carries the water west to the Gulf of Siam or east to the China Sea.

An Xuyen is the size of the state of Rhode Island, and holds about 250,000 people. At present no accurate census is possible since the Vietcong control over 90 per cent of the area and approximately 40 per cent of the population. The South Vietnamese believe Vietcong strength in the province is 1,200 men. The thick foliage of the area makes it easy for the V. C. to hide their movements and location, and one is always hearing about a sudden buildup or reduction of guerrillas.

There are 1,500 South Vietnamese troops in An Xuyen. Five hundred are ARVN—Regular Army of Vietnam. Five hundred are RF—Regional Forces, similar to the U.S. National Guard units. And five hundred troops are PF—Popular Forces, a home guard whose duties are to protect local bridges and to assist in the defense of their villages.

There is only one road (Route Four) which connects An Xuyen with the rest of Vietnam. The V.C. control this road, as well as the province's major waterways. All items moving into or out of the province do so under the surveillance of the V.C. In turn, the Vietcong collect a duty for allowing cargo to continue. Rice, fish, and fruits that leave pay duty, as do the cigarettes, gravel, sand, and goods that enter the area. The importation of sand and gravel is a major business here, since these items, which are necessary for construction, are totally lacking in the soft soil of An Xuyen.

Officials say that An Xuyen needs the following: First, water. Although the province is four feet above sea level, and the area receives 160 inches of rain a year, the province needs water. The problem is that the rains come in six months (July-December), and there follow six dry months (January-June). Natural wells are few, and water holes are salty. Through American aid, three deep wells were drilled, but more are needed.

Second, An Xuyen needs electricity. If there is light at night, officials say, the people will go out and talk together; if there is none, the people barricade themselves at home. It doesn't matter that the electricity is easily cut off before a V. C. attack. What is important is that the people, having light, feel secure, and when they have no light, feel oppressed.

Third, officials point out, the province needs projects which give the villagers assistance, but not charity. For example, sand and roofing are now too expensive for most people to purchase. Make these items available to them, officials urge, but have a man pay something for the materials. The price should be low enough so a person by his own efforts can put up a good roof or lay a cement floor for his home. When by his work a man has built a good place, he is likely to try to preserve it.

What do the people of the province want? Officials smile, are silent, then reply: "They want peace."

Camau

CAMAU, the capital of An Xuyen and the center of the South Vietnamese provincial control, consists of 30,000 people living in a jumble of shanties, canals, muddy roads, pitted asphalt streets, unkempt grass, and garbage piles. The shanties have one room which holds a bed, a table, and several chairs. Fewer than half these homes have a galvanized iron roof and a cement floor. Cooking is done over a charcoal burner, and water for

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drinking and washing comes from rain collected off the roof and into earthenware jugs.

For recreation, the town has pool parlors and cafes. There was a movie house. However, ARVN rangers, when refused free admission, wrecked the place.

While in Camau, I live with the USAID representatives. We occupy one of the city's better homes, a four-room residence that once belonged to a French official and later to the Vietnamese province chief. In common with everyone, our water source is the rain, but our rain water is collected into a large cistern. We bathe by dousing ourselves with water from a bucket we dip into the cistern; no one in Camau has a better shower facility. We have electric lights, but Camau's generator, installed in 1931, is now on the verge of collapse. Officially, electricity is available from 7:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M.; actually, we have light less than half that time. AID would supply us with a refrigerator, but there isn't enough current to run it, so we never made the request.

Camau is never quiet. Morning brings the noise of children crying for breakfast, of sampan oars dipping into the canal, of trucks backfiring, and of boys hawking sugar cane. Overhead is the thunder of helicopters and mortars as the ARVN military starts its day. In the afternoon, there is the sound of falling rain and the roar of overburdened and unmuffled motors. Artillery fires sporadically, and helicopters are heard returning from their excursions into the province. At night, there is a sound one can see: the tracers being fired into and out of town. Now the mortars have a lower pitch, and with each sound one feels a concussion: the Vietcong have started their night activity and are shelling nearby.

Camau could obtain supplies from the city of Bac Lieu. The two towns are connected by a waterway, and it is possible to guard the route. However, the Bac Lieu province chief is considered the biggest thief in Vietnam. Anything arriving in Bac Lieu would never proceed to Camau; the chances of receiving goods are better if they only have to face the Vietcong on Route Four.

The children of Camau like to laugh, make noise, eat sweets, and romp in the mud. They know to lie down when they hear bullets, and to fear strange objects in the road—those objects may be mines. The children smile at you if you smile at them. They enjoy coming up to Americans and yelling out, "O.K! O.K!" Then they touch the American's arms. What fascinates the children is the hair on his arms.

Most of the children won't learn much more than how to read and write. I saw 105 children in one classroom, and was told there wasn't enough room to give all the children an elementary-school education. Only a handful of the elementary-school graduates can be accommodated by the secondary school.

The people of Camau can be deceptive. A man squats in front of his doorstep; he is barefooted and wearing faded black pajamas; he stares ahead impassively. If, by circumstances, he becomes your host, he arises quickly and moves in an agile way. It may be he is fluent in four languages—Chinese, Vietnamese, French, and English—and converses in the language most suited to each guest.

The men are inquisitive. They want to know how much money each American makes, and how he makes it. They want to know how many women each American has, and how he conducts these affairs.

The U.S. Military

THE U.S. MILITARY in Camau includes 150 military personnel, a radar station, and one M-155 howitzer. Twenty men run the radar station, sixteen are in the team assigned to the Camau civilian hospital. Others in the post work as advisers to the Vietnamese, and the rest service the compound.

Quarters are cramped. The officers sleep three in a room, and each of the enlisted men's quarters holds eight to sixteen beds. The compound has a mess hall, a little bar, and a volleyball court. At present, it rains most of the time, and men who are off duty don't often have the chance to play volleyball. Instead they sit in their quarters or by the bar, and watch the rain. Occasionally, movies are shown in the mess hall. Camau is off limits for U.S. military personnel.

Life is slow. There are no positional battles, and the Vietnamese carry out search-and-destroy operations with little enthusiasm. No increase in the area under South Vietnamese control has occurred in the two years the U.S. Military has given assistance and advice.

For U.S. personnel, Camau is a one-year assignment. Boredom, lack of women, and dull work make the men irritable. The common view is: "Everyone in Saigon is out to make himself comfortable."

The compound is mortared by the Vietcong two or three times a month; to date these attacks have killed one U.S. soldier. The V. C. aim is erratic. Shells intended for MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) often fall wide of their mark and upon non-military areas; more than a dozen civilians have died from injuries received this way.

The following appeared in the September 13th issue of *Stars and Stripes*: "Last night the 250 men of Camau were awakened by mortar fire. They ran for their bunkers, some didn't make it." In fact, there were 150 men in the compound, and the only ones who "didn't make it," were those who stayed in bed. Sleep was the only loss suffered that night.

Camau is an island of South Vietnamese activity in a sea of Vietcong control; there are other

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areas, atolls in the same sea, that are under the command of South Vietnamese forces. In these places, American advisory teams work with the local ARVN-GVN (Government of Vietnam) units.

TWELVE MILES from Camau is Quan Long, a village surrounded by rice paddies and Vietcong. In the town is a squad of thirty-five RF and seventy PF commanded by an ARVN officer. Attached to this group are two American advisers: Major C., thirty-eight, a veteran of Korea, and Sgt. T., forty-seven, a veteran of World War II and Korea.

Sgt. T., who has worked with the Quan Long forces for ten months, said: "Have we changed anything? I don't know. Change is slow. The Vietcong are quiet now, more quiet than they have ever been. Are they waiting, or are they weak? I don't know."

Major C. took me around Quan Long. He pointed out projects he had advised on and obtained materials for: a new roof on the school building, drainage ditches and a cement floor for the marketplace, a better dock for canal boats. "What we do," he said, "is help them to keep cleaner, improve their schools, and take care of the facilities they have."

Why is a military man concerned with these problems?

A hamlet which was in the hands of the Vietcong reverted to South Vietnamese control. After the people of the village were under the GVN for six months, thy were asked if they preferred the present administration over the past one. No, they said, they preferred life under the Vietcong. For one thing, the Vietcong schoolteacher was a good instructor and a conscientious one. Under him, the children were learning to read and write well. The tests the teacher gave were thoroughly corrected and fairly graded. No one was refused schooling. In the Vietcong education system, pupils in the higher grades were used, if necessary, to teach the younger children. Under the Vietcong, a person convicted of a crime, like stealing, was taken away to a camp and lectured upon the errors of his way. Then he returned to the village and worked. Under the GVN, the villagers pointed out, a criminal is thrown into jail and left there.

Such experiences have convinced U.S. advisers in hamlets like Quan Long that support for the V. C. will not cease until the GVN (and the U.S.) undertakes reforms so far provided only by the Vietcong. In the opinion of these advisers, civic action is the best form of military assistance, and their job is to find what the people want and to provide it. Successful military tactics will follow from popular support, not precede it.

It is difficult, advisers say, to formulate military tactics for this conflict. In this war, unlike World War II or Korea, there is no front. There is no way to measure gain or loss, or to know where to initiate attack. The war zone is like the mud of Camau, always disappearing, then hardening, then changing to a slippery ooze around you.

For Americans, even adjustment to the physical environment of Vietnam is a problem. The temperature in An Xuyen is in the nineties, and the humidity near 98 per cent. After a five-mile patrol through the swamps around Camau, Americans even in the best of condition are sweaty and uncomfortable. The Vietnamese are unaffected. They are relatively hairless and hence free of the clinging sweat that hampers the movements of Americans. The ground in the area is slick and soft. The Vietnamese, who are small and thin, walk on top of the mud in which Americans sink.

The U.S. military has developed a troop carrier capable of carrying Americans and/or Vietnamese troops across the rice paddies. The carrier can hold up to thirty-six men, and moves them rapidly over the paddy. However, all rice shoots lying in the path of the transport are destroyed. To avoid the farmers' enmity, advisers in An Xuyen have so far declined to use the carrier.

American firepower brings up problems. A Vietnamese soldier related: "We were in Than-Than on an operation when the V. C. fired eight rounds of carbine fire at us. We called for the M-155 howitzer [at Camau, five miles away]. It threw fifteen rounds of artillery fire into the area. We should have pursued the V. C. with our men, not our mortars."

An American told me of this incident: "The ARVN were out on a patrol and picked up sniper fire from one V. C. in a mangrove. Instead of maneuvering to flush out the sniper, the patrol called for (U.S.) artillery and a (U.S.) airstrike. That wiped out the mangrove; then the patrol advanced." He added: "We're teaching the ARVN to fight a safe war, and maybe it's possible while we are here. But what happens when we go?"

One adviser said: "What if I had to live here for twenty years or forever? Would I urge offense, would I insist on closing the trap? Can I ask them to keep taking risks without end when I only have to take my chances for a year? We are not advisers to the Vietnamese, we are supporters—we give them guns and helicopters, but not advice."

American assistance is hampered by its shortages. For instance, there is a Vietnamese cadre which consists of young Vietnamese trained to work in hamlets alongside the people of the hamlet. The purpose of the cadre is to take a place which is merely under military control and change it to an area actively loyal to the GVN. The U.S. considers the cadre quite important and has taken responsibility for equipping, assisting, and placing this force.

For weeks Lt. D., of the ARVN, tried to move his cadre from Camau to the hamlet of Toy Binh. Since roads are blocked, he had to transport the group by helicopter. The cadre under Lt. D. was

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set up in the Diem regime, and responsibility for it, for some reason, rests directly with the American embassy. The embassy didn't have helicopters. The U.S. military couldn't assist him, for it didn't have enough helicopters to keep its own outposts supplied. AID was short to the point of not being able to provide one helicopter once a week for its provincial representative. When I came to Camau, Lt. D. was trying to get his cadre to Toy Binh, and when I left eight weeks later, he was still trying.

The U.S. military condemn the ARVN for not keeping its search-and-destroy operations secret. However, at one time on the night before such an offensive, the Vietnamese kitchen staff of the U.S. compound was told to report for work the next morning two hours earlier than usual to prepare an early breakfast for American advisers. The staff (and the Vietcong) knows that the only time American advisers require an early breakfast is on mornings when they are accompanying the ARVN on search-and-destroy operations.

American ingenuity isn't completely absent. The military needed gravel to line its airstrip. None was found until the U.S. supply sergeant took a new copy of *Playboy* to the ARVN compound. In exchange for the magazine, the supply sergeant returned with one meter of gravel worth 2,200 piastres ($20).

Nor is a sense of humor missing. One American adviser said, pointing to the group of Vietnamese he was accompanying on patrol: "Nothing in my twelve years in the army prepares me for this bunch. Look at them. Some of them salute me with their left hand, some of them salute me with their right hand, some just smile and nod at me when we pass. Some of the men wear berets, some wear caps. Look at that soldier. He has a helmet, but he's wearing it backwards. Some are wearing uniforms, some their black pajamas. Some wear boots, some don't. Some are carrying carbines, but that fellow just has a bayonet."

At Cha-La, another hamlet with American advisers, there are four U.S. officers, all of them young and new to their roles. (Supplying experienced officers for hamlet assignments is difficult since the war in the north is taking the biggest share of U.S. manpower.) The V. C. keep the town harassed by frequent bombardments and small arms fire on anyone who, even in daylight, steps beyond the edge of town.

Quan Long keeps in touch with Camau by a road between the two places. Sometimes the road is mined or covered by sniper fire, but daily contact is maintained. On the other hand, Cha-La is isolated. It can reach Camau only by radio and helicopter; there are delays in supplies reaching the post, and visits by MACV officers are rare.

Why isn't Cha-La overrun, Quan Long attacked, and Camau besieged? Why don't the Vietcong try to bring the other 6 per cent of the province under their control? Apparently the reason is that the Vietcong and the South Vietnamese military have reached a compromise.

The status quo is profitable for the Vietcong since all goods coming into or out of the province must pay the V. C. duty. Even the Americans contribute. For example, the military needs sandbags. They are used in the construction of bunkers to protect against Vietcong mortars and in jeeps to dampen the effect on the riders if the vehicle hits a Vietcong mine. The sand for these bags must be imported from outside the province, and the price MACV pays for that sand includes the V. C. tax.

If the V. C. attempted to gain one hundred per cent of the area, then Saigon would have to turn its attention to the province, since loss of the area completely to the Vietcong would be a terrible blow to the prestige of the South. To regain the ground, the GVN would institute a blockade and undertake a full-scale offense no matter what the cost. On the other hand, acceptance of the present conditions by the ARVN means it runs a small personal risk. In short, compromise permits the Vietcong to keep their profits, and the ARVN its safety.

There may be accommodation over the war, but there is no end to it. The ARVN go out on operations during the day, the Vietcong strike by night. Evidently each side feels it must keep reminding the other not to change the terms of the present understanding. Each side, too, must satisfy demands by superiors for action.

There are special events that call for activity. In October, the Vietcong leader of An Xuyen was accidentally killed. The new V. C. commander, to prove his worth, stepped up Vietcong terrorism. The V. C. overran a government-held village, killing sixteen Popular Force and fourteen civilians, including the hamlet chief. Perhaps in the future there will be a new government province chief, and to show his strength, he may have to initiate a campaign against the Vietcong.

The Camau Hospital

THE CAMAU HOSPITAL, with its one hundred beds, is the only one to serve the 250,000 people living in An Xuyen province. Until July 1966, the hospital staff consisted of only one doctor, nine nurses, seven midwives, three operating-room assistants, a pharmacist, a laboratory technician, and three janitors. Then the MILPHAP (U.S. Military Public Health Assistance Program) team arrived.

There are twenty MILPHAP teams in Vietnam. Their purpose is to render medical care for the civilians in the country and by doing so, to illustrate the extent of America's intent to assist South Vietnam. The Camau group included three U.S. military doctors, thirteen corpsmen, and, with my arrival, one volunteer physician.

Electricity for the hospital is available only

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eight hours a day and is sufficient to run a few overhead fans and the hospital sterilizer. There is no running water in the wards or clinic. The Vietnamese staff works from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. with a two-hour break from noon until 2:00 P.M. There is no one for night duty, not only because of the shortage of staff, but for the reason that the hospital lies at the edge of town and is within the night boundaries of Vietcong control.

The only medicines regularly on hand are aspirin, vitamins, cough syrup (though no small bottles in which to dispense it), penicillin, and soap. At times, there is a shortage of medicine like digitalis and supplies like plaster-of-Paris splints. Blood for transfusions is never available since stored blood requires constant refrigeration.

Under MILPHAP, the hospital initiated a tuberculosis clinic. Each patient received one gram of streptomycin twice a week and 300 milligrams of INH daily. The clinic was in operation for six weeks when the hospital ran out of Streptomycin. Thereafter, T.B. patients received only INH. Such a sudden change in regimen is the way tuberculosis bacilli become resistant to both drugs.

WHY IS THERE such a problem with supplies?

First, the hospital budget is only $30,000 a year. Besides taking care of hospital needs for drugs and supplies, this money must pay wages for the Vietnamese staff and provide upkeep on the hospital. Upkeep expenses are considerable since the hospital lies a quarter of a mile behind the American compound. In September, the V. C. mortared the installation, and one shell blew a hole in the roof of the hospital's medical ward.

Second, the hospital budget for 1966 was made on the basis of the needs of one Vietnamese doctor. The effect of increasing the hospital staff by four (U.S.) doctors and thirteen corpsmen was to use up, in less than three months, supplies intended for a year.

The MILPHAP organization cannot call for supplies from the Armed Forces. Though MILPHAP is made up of military personnel, it is directed by USAID. In turn, AID has contracted for MILPHAP to work under the GVN, and AID has provided the GVN medical depot in Saigon with drugs.

However, control of the depot rests in Vietnamese hands. The distribution of drugs and supplies by Saigon to An Xuyen was never effective, and the present chaotic state of warehousing and transportation in Saigon has made that distribution increasingly inefficient. Also, since the Vietcong control the roads of An Xuyen province, medical supplies for Camau need to be flown in. Bringing the supplies to the Saigon airport and obtaining plane or helicopter space for them is nearly impossible. That MILPHAP combines three different authorities (U.S. Military, AID, GVN) doesn't expedite its needs. Each authority usually takes the stand that the other two should carry the burden of assistance.

Next to obtaining supplies, the biggest problem for the MILPHAP team is communicating with the Vietnamese. It is difficult to practice medicine when one has to ask questions and get answers through an interpreter. It is impossible to practice medicine if even that communication is not available. There are few translators in Camau, and the ones in places like Saigon and Cantho are reluctant to move.

Lacking translators, U.S. personnel become involved in endless misunderstandings with the hospital staff and patients. The strain causes some Americans to lose their tempers and to turn openly belligerent and insulting to the Vietnamese. It only takes a few such incidents to compromise greatly the efforts of the MILPHAP team.

The hospital had one excellent interpreter, a boy of sixteen. After he had worked for three weeks, the local security police interviewed him. He was told that if the Vietcong attacked the hospital, the police would hold him as an accomplice. He became frightened and quit his job. The hospital lost a good interpreter, and the boy was alienated from the very authorities from whom he expected protection.

The MILPHAP team receives a great deal of help and cooperation from the hospital's Vietnamese chief, Dr. V. He lived in Hanoi until 1954, and, after the Geneva Agreements, came to Saigon. There he earned his medical degree, and then spent his required five years in the military. In 1964, the government assigned him to work in Camau. He is intelligent and pleasant; he speaks and understands English well. He approves of American intervention in Vietnam and hopes their presence will somehow enable him to return to Hanoi in the future.

What the hospital does: sets broken bones, repairs harelips and hernias, incises abscesses, undertakes war surgery. Depending on its state of supplies, the hospital is able to treat patients with pneumonia, tuberculosis, meningitis, appendicitis, typhoid fever, congestive failure, and rheumatic heart disease. MILPHAP treats a hundred-and-fifty outpatients a day and cares for nearly a hundred patients on the medical and surgical wards.

This is what I saw of the war while working in the civilian hospital first in Cantho, and then in Camau:

2:00 A.M., September 8th: four casualties arrive in the Cantho emergency room. One is dead, one has shrapnel in his side, two of the wounded have internal injuries and require immediate surgery. The first operation is for a twenty-six-year-old man who needs repair and resection of two feet of gangrenous bowel. The second operation is on a fifteen-year-old boy who has pieces of shrapnel in his abdomen.

3:00 P.M., September 8th: a seven-year-old boy is brought in. He was playing in front of his home

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and stepped on a land mine. His right leg must be amputated above the knee, and his left leg amputated below the knee.

8:30 P.M., September 9th: ten casualties from a Vietcong mortar attack arrive. One of the injured is a five-year-old boy with both his eyes blown out. An eight-year-old child with internal injuries needs an operation, as does a five-year-old boy with a smashed right leg.

Noon, September 10th: An operation is performed on a twelve-year-old boy with multiple grenade injuries.

5:00 P.M., September 10th: an above-the-knee amputation is necessary for a thirty-three-year-old man hit by a grenade.

11:00 P.M., September 11th: a twenty-three-year-old woman four months pregnant is hit by gunfire and needs her right kidney removed.

In Camau it was the same, except that casualties increased when the new Vietcong chief set out to establish his reputation. Civilian losses were heavy since the wounded had to wait until daylight before being moved to the hospital. Often by then, their blood loss was so great they died on the operating table or soon afterward.

USAID

THE STREETS of Saigon are filled with garbage, people, rusting pipes, torn-up lanes, piles of dirt, little children, motorbikes, battered cars, fumes, and noise. The city fears plague, cholera, typhus, and antibiotic-resistant venereal disease. Homes are surrounded by tall brick fences topped with barbed wire. At night, one hears in the distance, but not very far away, the barrage of mortars and bombs.

Americans in Saigon are there without their wives and families. The threat of Vietcong activity also forces the men to withdraw at night to well-guarded places where they drink or play poker and bridge. A few spend their time with the Saigon prostitutes.

In the midst of this disintegration stands the headquarters of USAID/Vietnam.

AID (U.S. Agency for International Development) has over a thousand people in Vietnam; their purpose is to assist the country in economic and social reforms. Few AID personnel know the country's needs. More than nine hundred AID employees have desk jobs in Saigon, and less than a hundred AID representatives are out in the country's forty-three provinces. These representatives, busy with reports and forms for the Saigon offices, hardly have the chance to reach the people and learn what they want.

AID programs coming out of Saigon (and Washington) often don't recognize the diversity of conditions in the country. For example: Bulgar is wheat raised in the U.S. and processed so it can be stored in government granaries. AID ships Bulgar wheat to the people of An Xuyen province. The province is able to export rice, fish, and vegetables, and needs no wheat. The people don't like the taste of the grain or its consistency and will not even feed Bulgar to their pigs. An Xuyen shipments make their way to the Vietcong in the area who have enough wheat, it is estimated, to keep themselves supplied with rations for thirteen months if their regular sources of rice should be denied them.

Hardly an American in the AID organization can speak Vietnamese, and communication is effected through translators with a wide range of ability. Close relations may develop between Americans and Vietnamese competent in English, but these Vietnamese usually come from a select segment of society, such as the wealthy or the Northern refugees, that is, from groups that have a particular interest in cultivating American goodwill.

AID is handicapped by the U.S. government's "Buy America" regulations. The farmers of the Delta could use small tractors of the type the Japanese manufacture. AID must "Buy America" and, therefore, brings vehicles too big for the average farmer's plots and too expensive for the farmer to buy or maintain.

AID doesn't give its provincial representatives the support they need. For instance: The roads and waterways of An Xuyen are controlled by the Vietcong. The only way for the AID representative to visit the countryside is by helicopter. Every week for the eight weeks I was in Camau, the representative requested a helicopter from regional headquarters in Cantho. Only once was his request granted.

Quarters for families of AID employees are provided by organizations in Manila, Hong Kong, and Bangkok. After four weeks of duty in Vietnam, the AID employee is allowed a five-day visit with his family. Arrangements for departure and delays in return extend the time from work to six or seven days. The effect of these prolonged absences is to disrupt the continuity of the employee's work and to keep him isolated from his Vietnamese counterparts.

Area Specialist Tao

TAO WAS the Vietnamese who worked for AID/Camau as the middleman between the AID representatives and the Vietnamese of An Xuyen. His route to Camau was circuitous and unexpected. In 1955, his father was killed by the Vietcong, and Tao's family moved from Central Vietnam to Saigon. Tao attended the University of Saigon but left to begin a political career in the Diem regime. In 1963, when Diem was killed, Tao's career was ended. He went to work for AID in Cantho. The AID representative there was having an affair with the AID Vietnamese secretary and thought Tao also had designs on the woman. Tao lost his post and was sent to Camau as a form of banishment.

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He, like me, was quartered in the AID house, and the two of us spent hours together talking about women, tennis, the people of Camau, and the problems of AID. Of himself, he said and indicated little except when someone referred to him as a translator or interpreter. Then Tao would rage, for he considered himself "an area specialist." His reaction was justified. He knew the limits of the Americans' understanding and their dependence on him to learn what the people of An Xuyen were doing, thinking, and how they were reacting to U.S. programs in the area.

He would talk for hours about the political offices he had held and what decisions he had made, and of the women he had known, and the ways he made love to them. Of his attitude toward the presence of Americans in Vietnam, of the future of the war, of how long he intended to remain in Camau with AID, he said nothing. Several times I asked him about these matters, but no matter how great the flow of beer and companionship, he laughed off my questions. He did so in a way that was not so much indifference or harsh refusal, as regret. It seemed his excellent command of English and his long experience with Americans had convinced him that he, an Easterner, could never explain himself to me, a Westerner.

The September Elections

ACCORDING TO Tao, An Xuyen voters went to the polls September 12th because the government told them they must if they expected to keep their present jobs and receive future government assistance. The U.S. embassy ordered Americans to remain away from the polling places to avoid the accusation of U.S. interference. Foreign observers, though invited, never came as far south as Camau. No one knows if provincial officials did or did not tamper with ballots in order to give Saigon the consensus it wanted.

On election morning, the Vietcong mortared the American military compound but did little else to disrupt the day. Perhaps they knew people in An Xuyen weren't stirred by the idea of sending a man to Saigon to draft a constitution. In the view of local people, preparing constitutions and/or edicts is a game played in the capital.

What the people of An Xuyen wanted was the chance to elect their province chief. He is the governor of the area, a man whose decision directly affects their lives. At present, the province chief is a military man appointed and removed by the Delta Corps Commander, another military man.

That American policy pushed for a constitutional convention in Saigon was, in the words of one Vietnamese, "an example of your cultural imperialism." He felt Americans were pushing their ideas rather than inquiring what the Vietnamese considered to be important for themselves. In part the American error arose, he thought, because of the influence of Saigon on U.S. thinking. An assembly in the capital to shape the country's future appeals to the politicians and policymakers already in Saigon.

The Reporter

ONE WOULD expect that Americans in An Xuyen would enjoy meeting the press as a chance to gain recognition for themselves. That isn't the case. One officer expressed a common attitude toward correspondents: "A reporter doesn't care about you or the truth. He wants a story for his own success. Keep them away from me."

A message from USAID regional headquarters in Cantho stated a correspondent would arrive at 10:00 A.M. and that he wanted to visit groups of Vietnamese cadres. The Camau AID representative stopped his work and arranged for the reporter to see the cadre in Dam Doi and to meet Lt. D. and his group. Then the representative went to the airstrip to meet the reporter. The correspondent arrived at 12:30 P.M. because of a side trip he suddenly decided upon. He didn't inform Camau of the delay. When he landed, he announced: "I want to visit hamlets. I've come to see the people, meet the people, find out what the people are doing."

He said he was touring the Delta in one day and so only had an hour-and-a-half to spend in Camau. While here, he wanted to see a particular hamlet and hamlet chief he had interviewed two years ago. Unfortunately, the correspondent didn't remember the name of the chief or the hamlet, or where the hamlet was.

The USAID representative informed his visitor about the Cantho wire, and of the arrangements already made. The correspondent became angry. He said: "You're trying to deceive me. You're trying to keep things from me. You're treating me like a tourist." Then he turned to his helicopter (provided by AID) and left.

His demand—"I want to go to the hamlets. I want to see the people"—was incredible. People of the Delta don't respond quickly to strangers, especially one who is returning immediately to Saigon. Their first impression would be that such a man is not a reporter but a spy. His visit to the hamlet would require that he be accompanied by an escort of ARVN soldiers. Their presence would bring looting and chicken-stealing to the hamlet. Under such circumstances, the reporter wasn't likely to develop an intimacy with the villagers. Another difficulty for him was that he didn't know a word of Vietnamese and depended on a translator. The correspondent's view was: "I'm not a linguist, I'm a reporter."

U.S. Policies

THE LACK OF opportunity, the personal poverty, and the constant danger facing the people of An Xuyen cause them to feel little enthusiasm for the

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Saigon administration. People admire Premier Ky for his honesty and courage, but no one believes he is the equal of Ho Chi Minh, who is considered the father of his country. In An Xuyen, the common attitude is that Ho is fighting the war to unify the country, and there is no real opposition to his aim. Vietcong enter hamlets saying: "We have come to drive the foreigners (the Westerners) off your land," and there is no real opposition to that aim either. Government officials concede that until Saigon finds a "figure and a purpose" equal to those of the North, there is no way of gaining the allegiance of the province for the GVN.

THERE WAS a B-52 raid on Son-An-Doc, twenty miles west of Camau. The Vietnamese in the sector were warned of the coming attack and told to leave; inevitably, the Vietcong heard the news, and they withdrew. The raid netted four dead pigs and one dazed old woman. The bombs, though they fell far from Camau, rocked the city. At first, people felt fear, then anger, for there were no missiles or fighter planes to oppose the bombers which were as free from attack as the people were helpless under it.

Some groups in Saigon and Washington argue that the U.S. should use a large military force to clear the land of Vietcong, and then turn the country over to the ARVN to hold. In An Xuyen the idea isn't held in high repute. Such a use of U.S. troops, advisers believe, would keep the ARVN from gaining the confidence and experience it needs if its forces are to hold the province. Secondly, the probable reaction of the Vietcong would be to hide their arms and return to farming. Most likely, American troops, after some months of inactivity, would turn the province over to the ARVN. Then the Vietcong would pick up their arms again, and ARVN and V. C. would face each other as they do now. Furthermore, the presence of a large number of U.S. troops would probably initiate friction between Americans and An Xuyen civilians, a problem so far avoided by careful U.S. policy in the area. Finally, most advisers feel that no military solution in An Xuyen could sustain itself on the basis of the present and continuing civil chaos.

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EDMUND WILSON

DR. McGRATH

A Play

Dr. Charles McGrath's study. At stage right is the Doctor's desk, which looks like that of a business executive. An easy chair for visitors faces it at an angle to the audience, so that anybody sitting in it can be seen three-quarters face. Very far to stage left is a closed door. The back wall is lined with bookcases, containing, on the right, darkly bound theological works and, to the left, contemporary books, mostly with their dust jackets on. On top of these bookcases leaning against the wall, are photographs of energetic modern divines whom Dr. McGrath admires and old prints of leaders of the Reformation. The wall on the left is bare, but has a window toward the front of the stage. The glass of this window is broken, as if a stone had been thrown through it.

Dr. McGrath is sitting at his desk, with an open Bible before him. He is a powerful-looking man in his forties, but nervous and evidently suffering from some severe tension.

McGRATH (*to himself, reading from Matthew XXIV*). "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

"But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come (*he looks up toward the door*) he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (*He looks toward the window.*)

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh"—

A knock at the door. McGrath looks up startled.

McGRATH. Yes?

A Servant enters. He is a slim, pale young man, with a pointed beard.

The SERVANT. There's a Mr. Duquesne to see you, Doctor.

McGRATH. Oh, yes. Ask him to come in here.

The Servant goes out. McGrath puts a marker in the Bible and sets it aside; then rather ostentatiously begins to write.

Francis Duquesne comes in. He has the look of a distinguished scholar, thin and sallow and dry, and he speaks with a faint French accent. He has left his hat and coat outside. McGrath gets up and shakes hands with him from behind the desk.

DUQUESNE (*nodding toward the manuscript on the desk*). Another sizzling sermon?

McGRATH. Sit down: I wanted to talk to you.

DUQUESNE (*sitting down in the easy chair*). Well, it's ages since I've seen you, Charley, though we're almost neighbors. The last thing I heard about you was that you were going to Allensburg, Pennsylvania. The First Presbyterian Church, wasn't it?

McGRATH. That didn't go through.

DUQUESNE. What a pity.

McGRATH. It's been a severe disappointment.

DUQUESNE. What was the trouble?

McGRATH. I'm not quite sure. I preached out there in October, and I know that I was very much wanted by the better elements in the congregation. I suspect that the Communists prevented it.

DUQUESNE. The Communists? In the congregation?

McGRATH. Yes.

DUQUESNE. Do the Communists out there go to church?

McGRATH. You never can tell nowadays. There are members of that congregation—even fairly well-to-do people—who refer to themselves as "liberals." When I hear the word *liberal* now, I know that it means Communist.

DUQUESNE. All the liberals aren't by any means Communists. I suppose I'm a liberal myself. And, Charley, I must say that any liberal might naturally be expected to object to the kind of sermons you've been preaching.

McGRATH. I haven't seen you in church.

DUQUESNE. I read about them in the papers. You're getting a lot of publicity.

McGRATH. Yes: I let the Communists have it. I haven't pulled any punches. In such a soft-headed community as this—where they don't want to admit they're menaced—I'm bound to attract attention.

DUQUESNE. Where do you see the menace?

McGRATH. Are you one of the softies, too? Don't you know that the Copperworkers' Union is Communist from top to bottom?

DUQUESNE. What's your evidence for that?

EDMUND WILSON's new book—*A Prelude: Landscapes, Characters, and Conversations from the Earlier Years of My Life*—will be published next month by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Mr. Wilson's essay, "The Invisible World of S.Y. Agnon," appeared in our December 1966 issue.

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McGRATH. Their defiant attitude—the outrageous demands they're making!

DUQUESNE. All unions make demands. They don't have to be Communists for that. Do you object on principle to organized labor?

McGRATH. I've never known much good to come of it.

DUQUESNE. They often get better conditions.

McGRATH. At the cost of being ruled by the Communists, and they're made to turn their backs on religion.

DUQUESNE. A good many of these workers here are Catholics—Italians and Poles and so on. There are two Catholic churches in town, and both, I understand, are well filled.

McGRATH. That means that those Polacks and Wops are enslaved to the Catholic Church.

DUQUESNE. To both Communism and the Catholic Church?

McGRATH. You have two conspiracies at work. I think they've made a deal with one another. I give the Catholics a blast, too, from time to time.

DUQUESNE. Of course, you know that the Catholic policy now is to promote more cordial relations with the various Protestant churches.

McGRATH. They're trying to take us over. I believe that the Communists are behind the whole thing. Didn't Father Leary here come out for the copper-workers in the last strike? Didn't Khrushchev go to see the Pope?

DUQUESNE. That was his son-in-law.

McGRATH. It's the same thing.

DUQUESNE. Look here, Charley: it may be that those elders in Allensburg—impressive, of course, though your sermons are—decided that you sometimes talked a little wildly.

McGRATH. That's always the accusation against a sincere reformer.

DUQUESNE. Well, people don't always want such alarming invectives as you've been giving them lately. They go to church to be edified and reassured.

McGRATH. What I want to do is wake them up.

DUQUESNE. You want to make them unsure and uncomfortable the way the old preachers did, with their visions of damnation, of being roasted alive for eternity—when ministers like Jonathan Edwards sometimes scared his weaker sinners into suicide.

McGRATH. As far as my congregation goes, it's their indifference that's suicidal. You can't temporize with Evil!

DUQUESNE. But I'm sure there are people like myself who wonder how a minister who calls himself a Christian can spend quite so much of his time preaching hatred and indignation.

McGRATH. If you were an honest Christian—

DUQUESNE. I don't call myself a Christian at all.

McGRATH. Well, if you *were* one, you'd feel indignation, too. Didn't Christ himself say—

DUQUESNE. That he came not to bring peace but a sword. Jesus did have his militant moments; but in general his doctrine was quite distinct from the policy of the more pugnacious Jews who hadn't yet been beaten by the Romans—that is, so far as it's possible to tell. We really know very little about him.

McGRATH. I suppose that by this time you're one of those skeptics who claim that He never existed!

DUQUESNE. Not at all. There's no real way of proving it, but I think it's impossible to doubt that there was someone remarkable there—a religious leader of genius—who inspired the Christian legend.

McGRATH. Is that what you're teaching them up there at the college?

DUQUESNE. What I give them is strictly factual—so far as one can know the facts. I don't teach them any theology—except as doctrine that people are known to have believed. As for the divinity of Jesus, I let them make up their own minds.

A knock at the door.

McGRATH. Yes?

The Servant appears.

McGRATH. Is it the man to fix the window?

The SERVANT. No, Doctor. It's your brother-in-law on the phone.

McGRATH. Tell him I'm busy just now.

The SERVANT. He wants to know if you're coming out to your sister's funeral.

McGrath reaches his hand toward the telephone on the desk, then decides not to pick up the receiver.

McGRATH. Tell him no. Tell him I'll call him later.

The Servant leaves.

McGRATH (*to Duquesne*). My sister out in Ohio just died. But I've got to stay here and fight it out. And then my drunken brother-in-law. He ruined my sister's life. He started as an ambulance-chasing lawyer, and now he works in a filling station. If I went out there, I wouldn't be able to see him without telling him what I think of him. Of course, I'll have to pay for the funeral—I suppose you think I ought to forgive him.

DUQUESNE. He's a very bad lot, is he?

McGRATH. He's godless and graceless and gutless. She deserved to get somebody better.

DUQUESNE. You were fond of your sister?

McGRATH (*after a moment's hesitation*). I was fond of her up to the time she married that jerk. —I suppose you'd have me pity and comfort him.

DUQUESNE. I've told you I am not myself a Christian. From my point of view, a bad character is just something that has to be accepted. You can perfectly well not want him around, but when things have gone beyond a certain point, there's no use in being angry.

McGRATH. He'll turn up here and ask for a handout as soon as he's got her buried. And I suppose you think I ought to help him. But I gave him handouts enough as long as Edith was living. This is going to be the end.—And then out there

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they'd have me at a disadvantage. Once they had me away from my base, they could make it look like an accident.

DUQUESNE. What do you mean? Who do you mean?

MCGRATH. The people we've been talking about. You see that broken window.

DUQUESNE. What happened?

MCGRATH. They threw a rock through it last night when I was sitting here in my study.

DUQUESNE. That doesn't sound like Communists. It must have been some of these kids. Had you been preaching any sermons against youthful delinquents?

MCGRATH. Yes: I certainly had. I said that they ought all to be shipped off to Vietnam.

DUQUESNE. I don't blame them, though, if they don't want to be. They don't believe in the government, they don't believe in religion. They don't want to raise a family and live the way what they call the squares live—so they don't want to learn to do anything, and they don't see any point in staying in college. They don't feel they have anything to live for except hopping themselves up with drugs and sex. They're really dying of boredom. So they make themselves a nuisance for kicks.

MCGRATH. And fall into the hands of the Communists. The Communists are behind all these demonstrations.

DUQUESNE. What was it you wanted to talk about?

MCGRATH. Well, what I wanted to ask you is this. Tell me, Francis—you're a scholar—(*He hesitates a moment*)—which of the words of Christ may be taken as really authentic?

DUQUESNE. Why, from the scholarly point of view, none of them. The Gospels as we have them must have been written long after Jesus's death. We don't know what he actually said or how much his words may have been edited.

MCGRATH. We are told in the Gospels again and again, as well as in the Pauline epistles, that He would come again to judge the world.

DUQUESNE. It may very well be that he did say that and that he had really come to believe it.

MCGRATH. That He would sit on the right hand of God and separate the sheep from the goats.

DUQUESNE. It was a very bad time for the Jews. They had been subjugated over and over. The followers of Jesus must have had to imagine, when they had seen their Messiah crucified, that he would still vindicate their faith in him and appear on the Judgment Day.

MCGRATH (*not paying much attention*). In Matthew, it is said that He may come like a thief, that we can never know when He is coming.

DUQUESNE (*smiling*). Yes: it says we must be on the watch.

MCGRATH. "Then two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

DUQUESNE. Yes: the faithful and wise servant is taken, and the evil servant is left.

MCGRATH. The evil servant has sinned in eating and drinking with the drunken.

DUQUESNE. But you may have erred a little on the other count that is mentioned—that of smiting your fellow-servants.

MCGRATH. What do you mean?

DUQUESNE. Why, your present attitude toward the Communists and the Catholic priests.

MCGRATH. The Communists and the Catholic priests are no fellow-servants of mine!

DUQUESNE. They believe, according to their lights, every bit as much as you do that they're serving the best interests of humanity.

MCGRATH. Your indifference, your infidelity have blunted your moral sense. I don't see how they can trust those young men to your demoralizing tutelage!

DUQUESNE. Well, a good many people would agree with you. That's why I'm out here at this little college instead of at one of the big seminaries. This Protestant Irishman who's President is an out-and-out agnostic who is fully in sympathy with my point of view. He's like something out of the 18th century.

MCGRATH. Well, we're in the 20th now, and we have to fight a form of godlessness that's more terrible than any Voltaireanism.

DUQUESNE. Take it easy, Charley: we're all of us fallible human beings, and we have to get along with one another—even with the Communists and the Catholic priests.

MCGRATH. I am a Christian; you're not.

DUQUESNE. I could never see Calvinism as Christianity. What you *are* is an old-fashioned Calvinist.

MCGRATH. My mother's family in Scotland were Covenanters—in fact, they were straight Cameronians.

DUQUESNE. And fought the Church of England for all they were worth, and hated the other Presbyterians who accepted the authority of the government. Well, I come from the Calvinist tradition, too; but I developed in the other direction. You remember Admiral Duquesne who played such a role under Louis XIV? He refused to forswear his Calvinist faith when the king offered to make him a marshal, but only on condition that he would repudiate Calvinism. That was my father's family, and that's why I went to the Seminary, but I found that I didn't believe and I didn't take orders afterwards. In your case, you've never departed from the original Calvinist bigo- (*Stopping himself from saying "bigotry"*), from the inevitable Calvinist intolerance, which had of course its historical justification. In the early days, Protestantism was wildly centrifugal, and it had to be consolidated. That was the mission of Calvin. He organized the Protestants all over Europe, and he did his best to destroy all those who didn't go along with him. Geneva was the Protestant Kremlin.

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McGRATH. How can you make such an outrageous statement?!

DUQUESNE. The Protestants had complained that the Catholic Church didn't want people to read the Bible, because they feared that its inconsistencies would make them ask embarrassing questions; but Calvin, in his *Institutes*, completely refashioned the Bible and provided the Protestants with a new sacred text which seemed to be more consistent because everything human had been excluded. The Jesus Christ of Calvin was no longer a loving Savior: he was a part that was needed for the functioning of the new theological machine. Since the gulf between God and man is so great, according to Calvin, that, by man's own efforts, he will never be able to bridge it, God has found it necessary to send down to earth a part-human divine emissary to make it possible for man to attain to him. Though one wonders why God should have gone to this trouble when the whole situation had been rigged in advance long before God sent down Jesus. He had already made his arrangements about who was to be saved and who damned—and we must never ask the reasons for his choices. So the Christian idea that salvation can be granted to anyone who earns it by repenting and accepting Jesus Christ had, for Calvinism, completely disappeared.

McGRATH. You could always talk brilliantly, Francis, but—

DUQUESNE. Please pardon this lecture, Charley. This habit of expository conversation is an occupational disease, I suppose.

McGRATH. You're more of a scholar than I am, but where does all this scholarship get us? I'm not a theologian—I'm a man of action, and action is what we must have.

DUQUESNE. But do you understand the principles you act on?—if you'll forgive my going on in this way. At the Seminary, they softpedaled Calvin. What we read was old Fuzzy Martin's rather watered-down version of the *Institutes*. But I looked the original up, and that's when I ceased to believe. As Protestants, when we lived in France, we had had to brace and stiffen ourselves to hold our own in a Catholic world; but when I came to grow up in America, there was no such pressure to pit oneself against, and I found myself following the development that had led from Luther to the Enlightenment. *J'ai brulé les étapes*, as we say—I soon became as centrifugal as any early non-Calvinist Protestant. What I'm trying to explain is that you and I are now at opposite poles in representing the different tendencies of Protestantism. You want to lay down the law—I want to reject authority.

McGRATH (*who has been listening to this with nervous impatience*). You want to talk about the past when our whole civilization is menaced. You're sitting up there at the college playing intellectual games with your students while I'm fighting the battle here alone. Not only do they break my windows, but they write me anonymous letters and make abusive telephone calls. I suspect that this room is bugged. I'm going to have the walls examined when the man comes to fix the window. I know the house is being watched. Did you notice that new boy who works for me?

DUQUESNE. Not particularly. Why?

A knock.

McGRATH. Come in.

The SERVANT. When do you want lunch, Doctor? It's almost one.

McGRATH (*to Duquesne*). Will you join me for lunch?

DUQUESNE (*rising*). No: I'm sorry—I can't. I'm lunching with the head of our sociology department to talk about coördinating our courses.

McGRATH (*to the Servant*). You can bring my tray in here. I'll call you in a few minutes.

The Servant goes.

McGRATH. I'm sorry you can't stay. I wanted you to observe him. Would you say he has a good face or a bad face?

DUQUESNE. With these beatnik beards they're wearing, it's hard to tell.

McGRATH. I don't like the piercing way he looks at me—as if he suspected me of something.

DUQUESNE. He's probably a sharp young Jew. They're likely to look at you like that. They watch me in my classes like hawks to see whether they can catch me out.

McGRATH. I don't trust him.

DUQUESNE. Where did you get him?

McGRATH. He answered an ad of mine. I'd had to let Katy, my Irish girl, go. It's made things very hard for me lately, because she typed as well as cooked—but she got to be completely impossible. I advertised for a secretary who could get me meals, and this young fellow turned up.

DUQUESNE. Where does he come from?

McGRATH. I haven't been able to find out. He's very noncommittal about himself. (*Lowering his voice*) I suspect very strongly he's a Communist. A good many of the Communists are Jews.

DUQUESNE. Have you talked to him? You can usually tell them by the line they take about things.

McGRATH. I've never talked to a Communist. (*Suspiciously*) You've evidently seen something of them?

DUQUESNE. When I worked at a settlement house, just after I got out of the Seminary, I used to make a point of seeing them. I even went to their meetings.—Look, Charley: I think you're upset by this Allensburg disappointment and the death of your sister—and then this broken window. It's enough to get anybody down.

McGRATH. I'm all right, and I'm ready for anything. (*He takes a revolver out of a drawer.*) I always keep this on hand.

DUQUESNE (*laughing*). Well, don't shoot your servant! They're hard to get nowadays.

McGRATH. I'm sure they're out to kill me.

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DUQUESNE. If I were you, I'd see a doctor and tell him about everything that's happened. If he'd send you to a sanitarium, you'd be able to get a rest and you'd be perfectly safe from your enemies.

MCGRATH. And give up the struggle against Evil? Nay, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against me!

DUQUESNE. I'll have to go along now. Could I come back for awhile after lunch?

MCGRATH. You're a scoffer!

DUQUESNE. I'll promise not to scoff. I'd like to hear more about what you're doing. This reminds me of the old bull sessions that we used to have at the Seminary. So farewell for the present.

He goes out, leaving the door open.

MCGRATH (*going to the door, calls*). All right, Jonathan.

Voices of BOYS, *outside the window.* What's happened to Katy Nolan? Where's Katy?

MCGRATH (*going to the window, still with the gun in his hand*). Get out of here! I've got a gun!

Laughter from outside.

McGrath returns to the desk and, still holding the revolver, sits in thought a moment; then puts the revolver down and picks up the phone and dials a number.

MCGRATH (*in answer to the operator*). This is 567-2204.

A moment's wait. He picks up some papers and covers the revolver with them.

Voice from the telephone. Hello.

MCGRATH. Hello, Fred—Charley speaking. I'm sorry I can't come out, but I'm up to my neck in engagements, and it's really important for me to be here.

FRED'S VOICE. We were hoping you'd conduct the service.

MCGRATH. After all, perhaps I'm not the right person. I'm sending along a check to cover expenses.—How is your job going?

FRED'S VOICE. It's gone.

MCGRATH. What happened?

FRED'S VOICE. It was a wheel I put on came off. It was all my own fault I know. I hadn't screwed it on hard enough. I just did it with my fingers, and I ought to have used a wrench. I was in such a state of mind about Edie!

MCGRATH. Was anybody injured?!

FRED'S VOICE. Just a few contusions. Nothing that won't be all right in a couple of months. But they're going to sue the garage, and Joe says that if they get a verdict, he's going to make me pay. But, as a lawyer, I know he can't do it. Actually I'm glad to be rid of that job. I never could get along with Joe: he was always jumping me for something.

MCGRATH (*who has been fooling with a paperknife and otherwise showing signs of impatience*). Well, what are you going to do now?

FRED'S VOICE. I don't know. I've talked to Ed Ferriss about getting a job in the post office, but—

MCGRATH. Now, I tell you: you have the funeral parlor send the bill to me, and I'll send you something to tide you over.

FRED'S VOICE. That's very kind of you, Charley. I—

MCGRATH. All right. I'll have to hang up. There's somebody waiting to see me. Sorry I can't get out there. Goodbye.

He hangs up and stares angrily at the desk.

JONATHAN *comes in with the lunch tray.*

MCGRATH. Put it here on the desk. (*He clears a place, pushing the gun away under the papers.*)

JONATHAN. That soup may taste a little funny. I don't know much about cooking, and I've been studying a recipe book. I tried to make a soup that has curry in it.

MCGRATH. I've told you that I like *plain* food.

JONATHAN. Taste it and see if it's all right.

MCGRATH (*looks down at the soup but does not taste it*). Tell me something about yourself. You're Jewish, aren't you?

JONATHAN. Yes.

MCGRATH. An Orthodox Jew?

JONATHAN. No, Doctor.

MCGRATH. Because I don't want to order ham or pork if you're not going to be able to eat it.

JONATHAN. I don't take the Mosaic prohibition as strictly binding any more, but it's hard to break a habit. Don't deny yourself on my account, though. I can always eat bread and vegetables.

MCGRATH. You don't belong to a Reformed congregation?

JONATHAN. No, Doctor.

MCGRATH. You're not by any chance a Christian convert?

JONATHAN. Not exactly: no.

MCGRATH. But you do have some knowledge of Christian ideals.

JONATHAN. I've given the subject some attention.

MCGRATH. My friend who was here just now was telling me my sermons were un-Christian because I'm preaching war on the Communists. Does that seem to you un-Christian?

JONATHAN. Well, the early Christians were Communists.

MCGRATH. That was quite a different thing. It was the holding of goods in common that one finds in a monastic order. The Communism of our time is an infamous plot to deprive people of their property and turn them against religion. What can we do except exterminate them like vermin?

JONATHAN. Did your friend think we ought to love our enemies the way that Jesus says?

MCGRATH. Christ follows that up by saying, "Do good to them that hate you." Aren't we doing the Communists good by preventing them from doing harm?

JONATHAN. Would you say it was doing people good to drop bombs on them and burn them alive?

MCGRATH. When it's a question of stopping something evil, the more effective the weapons, the better.

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JONATHAN. Have you heard about the non-violent resistance movement?

McGRATH. Rubbish! What would non-violence mean in a practical crisis such as ours in Vietnam? Abandoning the bulwarks we've built against the tide that's been mounting to flood the world!

JONATHAN. Even under Communist domination, the Christian could always say, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

McGRATH. You seem to know the Scriptures pretty well for a Jew.—Have you ever had Communist affiliations?

JONATHAN. I was too young in the 30's to go through the Communist phase.

McGRATH. You've taken part in these demonstrations?

JONATHAN. A few.

McGRATH. That's all the work of the Communists.

JONATHAN. Not these nowadays. They always try to infiltrate any movement of protest, but at present they don't count for much. They're not strong enough to capture any movement. I don't think we've got anything to fear like Eastern Europe or Russia.

McGRATH. Were you born in Russia?

JONATHAN. No: I was born in Bethlehem. (*McGrath looks up, startled; then down at the desk, embarrassed.*) Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. But we left there when I was very young.

McGRATH. Where did you grow up?

JONATHAN. In Brooklyn, where my father had a small furniture factory.

McGRATH (*still looking down*). Did you have the usual Jewish education?

JONATHAN. Yes: I went to the yeshiva, if that's what you mean. I was a prize *yeshiva bòkher. (He smiles.)* I used to dispute with the rabbis. I even wanted to be a rabbi myself.

McGRATH (*looking up*). What stopped you?

JONATHAN. I had the curiosity to read up on the literature of Jesus, and I came to the conclusion that Jesus was the greatest of the Jewish prophets —the fullest expression of the will of our God. The later prophets had been leading up to him and Hillel, the great rabbi, had prepared the way. They were finding that our God was a God of love.

McGRATH. And that makes me a bad Christian if my God says, "Vengeance is mine"?

JONATHAN (*with a Jewish gesture of outflung hands*). I am your judge?

McGrath drops his eyes and for a moment is silent.

McGRATH. You act as if you were.

JONATHAN. Excuse me. There's the telephone.

He goes out.

McGrath takes up a spoonful of soup, then puts it down again.

McGRATH (*muttering to himself*). He said it might taste rather queer. I have to be careful nowadays.

Jonathan reappears.

JONATHAN. It's Deacon Fairchild. He says it's urgent.

McGrath picks up the phone; Jonathan goes.

McGRATH. Yes, Deacon.

VOICE OF FAIRCHILD. There've been vandals in the church.

McGRATH. What? What did they do?

VOICE OF FAIRCHILD. They broke into the church and did quite a lot of damage. They threw the chairs down from the choir-loft and daubed obscene words in green paint, and they've torn your gown to shreds.

McGRATH. The Devil is loose among us! I'll come over as soon as I can. You notify the police.

He puts the receiver down, sits terrifiedly staring a moment, then gets up and goes to the door.

McGRATH (*calling*). Jonathan!

Jonathan appears.

McGRATH. Did you take those new hymnals to the church?

JONATHAN. Yes, Doctor. Last night.

McGRATH. Did you notice anything wrong?

JONATHAN. No, Doctor. I put them in the racks and piled the old ones up in the vestry.

McGRATH. The church has been vandalized.

JONATHAN. It must be that River Street gang. They've evidently got it in for you, Doctor.

McGRATH. Did you get that green paint for the door?

JONATHAN. Yes: I painted part of it this afternoon, and I'll finish it in the morning.

McGRATH. Is the pail in the house?

JONATHAN. Yes.

McGRATH. It's the work of the Devil, like everything else!

JONATHAN. A possible explanation, Doctor, is that Katy Dolan, who worked for you before, has a young brother who lives down there, and he seems to have a grudge against you.

McGRATH. A possible explanation is that you've come to make trouble for me! What are you, I'd like to know. Who are you?

JONATHAN. I told you just now, Doctor.

McGRATH. You've told me that you were born in Bethlehem and that your father was a carpenter and that, as a boy, you disputed with the rabbis. You want me to think that you're Jesus Christ, and that you've come to reproach me, to judge me. Actually, you're a Communist agent!

JONATHAN. I've told you I'm not a Communist.

McGRATH. And you told me the Apostles were Communists.

JONATHAN. I'm simply here as your servant.

McGRATH. The suffering Servant, eh?

JONATHAN (*with a Jewish gesture*). I will be if you talk like that, Doctor.

McGRATH. You're trying to frighten me with your false divinity, your mouthing of texts, your pretended humility! But I'm able to defend myself! (*He picks up the revolver from the desk and*

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threatens Jonathan with it.) Confess that you've come here to terrorize me, to hound me out of my pulpit. A devil in the guise of our Savior! You've been spying on me and you're trying to blackmail me—getting scandal from Katy's brother. You want to give me a bad conscience. Well, the moment has come to end this! Any jury in the world would acquit me!

Jonathan moves backwards to the blank left wall and stretches out his arms in the pose of the Crucified, closing his eyes and dropping his head.

McGrath stands staring and speechless. A long moment of silence; then he drops the hand with the gun.

McGRATH (*in a frightened voice*). Is it really thou—Savior?

Jonathan lifts his head and looks upon McGrath with great compassion and sadness.

McGRATH. Thou hast really come again! How base and unworthy I am to have stood in Thy divine presence and not to have recognized Thee! (*He puts down the revolver on the desk and comes forward and falls to his knees.*) Thou accusest me. I know I have sinned. (*Jonathan assumes a sterner look.*) Can anyone since Thou camest to redeem us ever have sinned more grievously than I? God gave me authority, eloquence, a magnetic personality—strength and courage to fight against Evil. I had everything, I thought in my pride, to make a great preacher and a consecrated servant of God. But God, who had seen my sin, has known well, in His infinite wisdom, that I should never be able to expiate it and has condemned me to remain forever in this unawakened second-rate town. I have been punished by being made to preach to these petty and darkened souls who do not merely not hear me, they hate me. I am punished, Master, for that which Thou knowest, since I doubt not Thou knowest all things —for the sins of the flesh, for impurity—for the impurity of incestuous relations, which is a double abomination in Thy sight. Hardly can I hope for forgiveness in pleading that we were young people, my sister and I, alone in the country with our parents on a poor isolated farm; that we had only one another for companions, that in childhood we had slept in the same room, that it was natural for us as children, when it got to be too cold in winter, to snuggle up together in the same bed; and that this later led to what Thou knowest. I won a scholarship—for I showed early promise—went East to the Seminary. I left her pregnant, though she never let me know it. She married a good-for-nothing, and the child was lost. When I went home and found what had happened, I never wanted to see her again. I thought about her sometimes with anguish—driving miles to a beauty parlor to try to make herself attractive for the miserable wretch she had married; but I labored and prayed and wrestled to turn myself into a force for good. Was all my labor wasted? Can I hope for no pity and forgiveness? I have never been able to believe in the strict doctrine of Calvin's *Institutes*: that God has condemned us from birth. Thou didst come into the world to redeem us, and I have tried to earn my redemption. I have struggled all my life with the flesh, and I have been on the whole successful—though, I own it with remorse, some lapses. This poor girl Katy—the Tempter led me astray.

Duquesne has appeared at the door and stands listening.

McGRATH. I could not marry such a girl—and she, of course, a Catholic—it would have hurt my prestige as a preacher—I could hardly have taken her to Allensburg—and I had to put her away to protect myself and her from my passion. Though I gave her a high recommendation in the hope that she would find work elsewhere, I fear her reputation has suffered, and I have earned the bitter indignities to which I am now subjected. Oh, Jesus, take pity upon my contrition. Let me meet my sister Edith in the other world—let me atone for what I have done!

Duquesne comes forward from the doorway; McGrath looks around amazed. Duquesne puts his hand on his shoulder.

DUQUESNE. Look, Charley: I'm sorry to intrude on your devotions, but I think that I ought to tell you you're laboring under a misapprehension. This boy is not Jesus Christ: he's a sociology major from the college. I've just had lunch with our sociology man, and he told me all about him. He took this job here with you as an assignment of sociological field work.

McGrath looks up at him dazed. Jonathan has dropped his arms.

DUQUESNE. You'd better get up, old man. I've brought the doctor from the college, and I think that you ought to see him.

McGRATH (*rising to his feet*). What can a doctor do for me now?

DUQUESNE. He can give you a tranquillizer and perhaps relieve your mind.

Duquesne takes his arm and leads him out.

Jonathan flexes his arms, then picks up the revolver and puts it in his pocket.

Duquesne comes back into the room.

JONATHAN. That was a tough one.

DUQUESNE. I could see.

JONATHAN. I'm sorry I had to hear his confession, but he was on the point of shooting me.—Here, you better take this gun. (*He hands Duquesne the revolver.*) He imagined I was a Communist pretending to be Jesus, so I thought I could only save my life by pretending that I actually was. The whole thing was very embarrassing, and it's hard to keep in that position—as if you were nailed up—without moving a muscle.

DUQUESNE. As a student of sociology, what conclusions did you come to about the Doctor?

JONATHAN. I don't think he's difficult to analyze. From the psychological point of view, he's got a long-standing neurosis—a tie-up with this sister

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who just died. Now he always has to repudiate his women the way he did her. That's what happened with this maid he just dismissed. From the economic standpoint, he's terrified that the Communists will take over the country and that he won't have any more job. I tried to reassure him about that, but he's too paranoiac now to be reassured. In the strictly sociological connection, he wants somebody to do everything for him here—to do cooking and housework and secretarial work for fifty dollars a week. That probably shows the clergy are underpaid.

But I really feel sorry for him. He's had to spend his whole life pretending. A Jew has to do a certain amount of pretending, but usually not on that scale. It's been hard enough for me this week to pretend to be a butler—and then pretend to be Jesus!

McGrath comes back from the other room.

DUQUESNE. Did he give you a tranquillizer?

McGRATH. Yes.—I want to do some private phoning.

DUQUESNE. All right: we'll leave you alone.

They go out.

McGrath dials and gives his number.

A Carpenter appears at the door.

The CARPENTER. Is it all right to work on the window?

McGRATH. Go on. You won't disturb me. (*To the telephone, with difficulty controlling his voice.*) Hello, Fred. I've decided to come out, after all, but I can't perform the service. This whole thing has very much—broken me up. Yes: I'm getting a reservation for tomorrow morning. You don't need to meet me.

He hangs up.

McGRATH (*to the carpenter, who has been taking out the broken panes and measuring the window frame*). I was afraid you weren't coming today. It's important to get it repaired.

The CARPENTER. I'll have to get a pane the right size.

McGRATH. Can't you finish it up tonight?

The CARPENTER. It'll take a little time.

McGRATH. Well, get it done as soon as you can. It's uncomfortable to have that cold air coming in.

The CARPENTER. It's a little bit late for today. But I'll try to do it sometime tomorrow.

McGRATH. All right. Please see that you do.

The Carpenter goes out with his tools.

McGrath picks up the Bible and opens it, as if he were looking for a text; then puts it down and sinks on the desk, his shoulders shaking with sobs and his hands clasping his head.

McGRATH. Oh, Edie, I thought you'd be so proud of me!

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MICHAEL FRAYN

RUSSELL AND WITTGENSTEIN

As a sweeping particularization, you might say that the history of philosophy in this century is the history of Russell and his pupil Wittgenstein. By philosophy I mean of course not philosophy in general, but the strictly limited discipline which goes under that name mainly in the universities of the Anglo-Saxon countries. Most people, I suppose, know or think they know what philosophy in this specialized sense is. But it's not easy to put it into words. It's philosophy-at-large, after all the more grossly substantive and particular elements such as speculation upon the nature of man, society, religion, history, and so on, have been purged away. I'm not sure that it's possible to define what remains without begging the question. Because what remains is to a considerable extent speculation upon the nature of what remains. One might almost say that philosophy, in this sense, is largely the philosophy of philosophy.

Whatever it is, though, it comes from Trinity College, Cambridge—from Russell, Wittgenstein, and Moore. Above all from Russell and Wittgenstein. For all the major philosophical ideas of this century were initiated, shaped, or inspired by one or the other of these two men, or by both of them together. Their collaboration and influence on each other were extraordinarily fruitful, though two more ill-assorted men can scarcely ever have worked together. Their later estrangement, when Wittgenstein turned his back upon everything they had done up till then, and Russell turned *his* back upon everything that Wittgenstein did thereafter, marks the ultimate frontier between traditional and modern philosophy. It is also a poignant example of the vicissitudes of alienation and mutual incomprehension to which even the most promising of human relationships are subject.

Russell is one of those great men who stand like straight roads across the tangle of time, connecting us directly with the remoteness of the past. He was born in 1872; his character and associations take us back much further still. That beaky aristocratic profile in itself suggests the generations of enlightened but unquestioned privilege: what Russell calls his family's "peculiar brand of aristocratic liberalism." His godfather was John Stuart Mill. His parents, both freethinkers, died when he was a child, and he was brought up in the house of his grandfather, Lord John Russell. Lord John introduced the Great Reform Bill of 1832; visited Napoleon on Elba; was born at the height of the French Revolution, in the last decade of the 18th century. Bertrand Russell seems close to that time, in the same tradition as his great-great-grandfather, who after studying the depth of the lava on the slopes of Mount Etna announced that the world must have been created earlier than 4004 B.C. as the theologians held, and was cut by the County and ostracized from society as a result. The clear classical daylight of the 18th century shines through Russell's thinking, and the elegant English prose in which it is set forth. "I like precision," he wrote in *Portraits from Memory*. "I like sharp outlines. I hate misty vagueness."

The light is the light of reason, and it casts clear hard shadows, sharply distinguishing the true and the false. The natural world is brilliantly illuminated. The supernatural evaporates with the morning mists. Only man remains ambiguous. Sometimes he occupies the foreground of the picture, dominating the perspective; sometimes he is a tiny figure lost in the immensity of the landscape—a "groveling animalcule," as Russell calls him in some moods, crawling upon the surface of "this petty planet." As a boy, Russell became devoted to Shelley, and there is an oddly pantheistic strain in a letter which he wrote in 1918 to Constance Malleson:

> I must, before I die, find *some* way to say the essential thing that is in me, that I have never said yet—a thing that is not love or hate or pity or scorn, but the very breath of life, fierce, and coming from far away, bringing into human life the vastness and fearful passionless force of non-human things. . . .

But at other times he looks at the universe, and all its grandeur seems to dissolve into something human after all—to be really nothing but the grandeur of the human intelligence through which it is understood:

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> Academic philosophers, ever since the time of Parmenides, have believed that the world is a unity. . . . The most fundamental of my intellectual beliefs is that this is rubbish. I think the universe is all spots and jumps, without unity, without continuity, without coherence or orderliness or any of the other properties that governesses love. The external world may be an illusion, but if it exists, it consists of events, short, small, and haphazard. Order, unity, and continuity are human inventions, just as are catalogues and encyclopaedias.
>
> (*The Scientific Outlook.*)

His conception of philosophy, too, is classical. He sees it as a search for truth, in the way that scientists used to see science as a sort of universal anatomy—a laying bare of the world's skeleton of natural laws. The picture which scientists and philosophers tend to prefer of themselves today, as builders constructing explanations which may eventually have to be knocked down to make room for road-widening, is alien to his nature. The truth he wished to locate, moreover, was of a special sort. It was the self-guaranteeing truth, the truth that could not be otherwise, which has lured philosophers over the centuries like the prospect of perpetual motion. Looking back upon his life on his eightieth birthday he wrote:

> Up to the age of thirty-eight I was troubled by skepticism and unwillingly forced to the conclusion that most of what passes for knowledge is open to reasonable doubt. I wanted certainty in the kind of way in which people want religious faith.
>
> (*Portraits from Memory.*)

He did not find it. He sought it for a long time in mathematics and logic, but was finally convinced by Wittgenstein that the dead certainties of these disciplines were certainties only because they were dead—because they were tautologies, which said nothing, but merely repeated themselves with more or less complexity. It cost him a good deal of pain to accept this. "The demand for certainty," he told his biographer, Alan Wood, in later life, "is one which is natural to man, but is nevertheless an intellectual vice." All the same, this demand for certainty, for truths which somehow come with their own validity stamped indubitably upon them, is fundamental to Russell's work, and places him firmly in the central tradition of European philosophy. European philosophers—empiricists as well as rationalists—have always been driven by two linked compulsions. One is the obsession with the syllogism as the gold standard of reliability, the model truth process by which all other ways of obtaining information must be judged. The other is the consequent anxiety that all our ordinary knowledge of the world falls short of this ideal, and is therefore illusory, or in need of justification, or of translation into less misleading terms, or of reduction into statements which mention only the raw fragments of our immediate experience. Russell's own contribution to logic, paradoxically, helped to discredit its claim to be the one valid central currency of truth. But he has never given up the idea that our statements about the world need to be justified by interpretation, and it is this which places him in the direct tradition of Descartes and Leibniz, of Berkeley and Hume, and which cuts him off from the sort of philosophy which is practiced by most other English philosophers today.

RUSSELL IS above all else a logician. He may well be the greatest logician since Aristotle; certainly he is one of the very, very few whose discoveries in logic have had wide-ranging ontological implications for philosophy in general. He came to logic, and philosophy, by way of mathematics, which he read first when he went up to Cambridge in 1890. By the end of three years of undergraduate mathematics he had become very disenchanted with the subject. He felt that too much attention was paid to manipulative dexterity, and not enough to establishing the validity of the manipulations. It irritated him to be confined to operations within mathematics, when he wanted to ask questions from outside, about the system as a whole. What were numbers? How could mathematical proof have validity? How could mathematical operations apply to the world of things in some cases, and in other cases, with certain sorts of numbers, not apply at all?

After he had finished the Mathematical Tripos, he sold all his books and swore that he would not touch the subject again. He did, however, and it was his preoccupation with its foundations which finally launched him into his career in logic. In 1900, he attended the International Congress of Philosophy in Paris. It was the most important event, he said later, in the most important year of his intellectual life. Peano, of Turin, who had been working to prove that the whole of mathematics could be derived from five primitive axioms, was at the Congress, and Russell was deeply impressed by his performance in the discussions. He borrowed Peano's complete works from him on the spot, and read them immediately.

He was struck by certain logical reforms proposed by Peano which made it possible to show that number was not derived from counting, as philosophers had previously supposed, but that counting was derived from number. On the earlier analysis, it had been difficult to show why any one thing should be counted as one. What was the quality of oneness which inhered in one orange, or in Polyphemus's one eye? Why not point at Polyphemus's eye and count "one, two, three"? Or "one, two, three, four, five"?

Peano suggested that the oneness was not a property of Polyphemus's eye at all—it was a *property of the property* of being Polyphemus's eye. In other words, the objects in the world

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which are defined by the property of being Polyphemus's eyes form a class; and one of the properties of this class is that it has only one member. After Ulysses has put it out, Polyphemus has no eye. This is not to say that he has an eye which is to be counted as nought because it is the sort of eye in which the quality of noughtness can be perceived to inhere; the noughtness is clearly not the property of an *eye*, since an eye is just what there isn't. To say that the Cyclops has no eye is to say that the class of objects defined by the property of being Polyphemus's eyes has no member.

In fact this ground had already been covered sixteen years before by Frege, though Russell believes that Peano almost certainly didn't know it. Ironically, Russell himself had been given a copy of Frege's book, but had never read it.

Russell saw that Peano's concept of number as a property of classes could be used to offer a definition of number in terms which were not mathematical but logical. Logic is the geometry of language. Its material is propositions, and its values are truth and falsity. Russell interpreted the properties which qualified things for class-membership as incomplete propositions, which could be completed by a certain range of subjects to make true propositions. In the case of Polyphemus, the incomplete proposition "is an eye of Polyphemus" can be truly predicated of one subject. Russell expressed this in terms of what he called "propositional functions," based upon the familiar idea of functions in mathematics. In mathematics, $y=x^2+1$, for example, is a function of x; the value of x^2+1 depends upon the value given to x. So, proposed Russell, in the propositional function "x is an eye of Polyphemus," the value given to x determines the logical value (true/false) of the proposition. As we know, "x is an eye of Polyphemus" is true for one value of x. The propositional function "x is an eye of Ulysses" is true for two values of x. And so on. In other words, the notion of possessing a property has been subtly abstracted from the physical world of giants and eyes, and moved into the realm of language, where it is governed by the laws of logic.

Russell then showed that it was possible to enumerate the values of x for which a propositional function was true without using numbers, and employing only logical formulae. A class with one member is defined as a class with a member x, where if y is a member, then y is identical with x. Similarly, increasingly complex formulae cover classes with two members, three members, etc.

What Russell has defined here is not the numbers one, two, three, and so on, but specific cases of oneness and twoness. By a brilliant second application of the concept of classes he offered the general definitions in terms of the specific cases. One, he said, was the class of all classes with one member. Two was the class of all classes with two members. And so on. The mystery of mathematics—and the mysticism which it had evoked from philosophers—was over. Russell had shown that mathematics and logic were of the same flesh.

He had met Peano in July. On the last day of December (the last day, too, of the 19th century) he finished the draft of a book setting forth his system, under the title *The Principles of Mathematics*. "The months since the previous July," he wrote later, "had been an intellectual honeymoon such as I have never experienced before or since. Every day I found myself understanding something that I had not understood the previous day. I thought all difficulties were solved and all problems were at an end."

THE 20th century, and further work on the subject, brought disillusionment. Russell rewrote part of *The Principles of Mathematics* and began work with Whitehead on *Principia Mathematica*, a complete axiomatic systematization of mathematics on the basis of the new theory of number. It ran to three volumes, and involved Russell and Whitehead in ten years of the most grueling intellectual labor. Early in 1901, fundamental logical difficulties began to show up which weighed heavily upon Russell, who was mainly responsible for the philosophical aspects of the work. In the end these problems evoked from him solutions of great ingenuity, which influenced not only mathematical logic but the whole course of philosophy over the next forty years.

The difficulties were a series of paradoxes generated by terms and propositions which referred to themselves. One of the oldest and best-known of them is the paradox of the Cretan liar, to which St. Paul refers in the Epistle to Titus. Epimenides the Cretan said that all Cretans were liars. Or, as he might have said, to bring the paradox out more sharply, "I am now lying." Is he lying? Or is he telling the truth? If he is lying, then he is doing what he claims, and is therefore telling the truth. If he is telling the truth, the truth is that he is lying.

The paradox of self-reference which harried Russell in his work on mathematical logic was one involving the concept he had introduced of classes of classes. One of the classes of classes, clearly, is the general one—the class of all classes. And since the class of all classes is a class, it must be a member of itself. Most classes, however, are not members of themselves—the class of oranges is not itself an orange—and there is plainly a class of all these classes which are not members of themselves. Now it occurred to Russell to ask: Is *this* class—the class of all classes which are not members of themselves—a member of itself? If it isn't it is, and if it is it isn't. Something, somewhere, had gone wrong.

Russell says that he felt this as almost a personal challenge, and would, if necessary, have spent the rest of his life in an attempt to meet it. He wrote to Frege to tell him about the paradox.

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Frege was stunned by it. He wrote: "Mathematics is tottering." He did his best to repair the damage, but in the end gave up his life's work on mathematical logic as misguided, and turned to geometry instead.

Russell himself regarded the problem at first as an irritating triviality, a mere detail to be set to rights before the main work could continue. But like a piece of grit which brings a great machine to a halt, it persistently blocked the progress of *Principia Mathematica.* Throughout 1903 and 1904, Russell's work was almost entirely devoted to solving this paradox, without any sign of success.

"Every morning I would sit down before a blank sheet of paper," he writes of this period, in the volume of autobiography which he published recently. "Throughout the day, with a brief interval for lunch, I would stare at the blank sheet. Often when evening came it was still empty."

Eventually, as often happens, he came upon the start of a solution almost accidentally, as a by-product of his work on another set of problems. These were problems connected with the idea of existence. Philosophers had traditionally treated existence as a property, like yellowness or squareness, which a thing either possessed or did not possess. This conception of existence was the basis of the old ontological argument for the existence of God. Since God is defined as having all possible properties, the theologians argued, and existence is a property, God must by definition exist. The weirdness of this notion is brought out even more sharply if one considers what things are like when they fail to include existence among their properties. Meinong argued that even non-existent things must exist in some strange sense, or we shouldn't be able to talk about them, as we obviously can. If we can say that fairyland does not exist, and we can, then fairyland must have some sort of being, however tenuous, for us to be able to assert the property of non-existence of it.

Russell shone the light of the new logic upon this world of ghosts, and it vanished forever. Once again, he used the apparatus of propositional functions. Just as he had dissolved the concept of number by treating it as an attribute of classes defined by propositional functions, so he dissolved existence and non-existence by treating them as the truth or falsity of a propositional function for at least one value of the variable. In other words, he removed the concepts of existence and non-existence from the physical (or metaphysical) world, and located them as logical concepts in the realm of language, as special cases of the logical concepts of truth and falsity.

All this is implied in Russell's theory of descriptions, which he set forth in a paper entitled "On Denoting" for publication in *Mind.* "This doctrine struck the then editor as so preposterous," says Russell, "that he begged me to reconsider it and not to demand its publication as it stood. I, however, was persuaded of its soundness and refused to give way. It was afterwards generally accepted, and came to be thought my most important contribution to logic."

THE THEORY of descriptions was designed as a piece of technical equipment for the logician, but its general implications in philosophy were as radical and far-reaching as those of the thermionic valve in communications. It killed the simple assumption that where there was a word there was also a something that the word denoted. It discouraged what one might call the botanical view of philosophy—the idea that the purpose of philosophy was to discover what things were and what things were not in the realm of metaphysics, in the way that 19th-century botanists catalogued the varieties of plant life. It encouraged the idea, which has characterized philosophy in one way or another ever since, that the study of language and its logical topology is a primary source of philosophical insight.

These were long-term consequences. In the short term it suggested to Russell one way out of his difficulty with the class of all classes which are not members of themselves. It suggested that classes might go the way of fairyland, and indeed of numbers. It suggested that classes were not themselves things, but expressions by which one indicated the range of values of the variable for which a propositional function was true.

The paradoxes led Russell to another extremely fruitful solution as well—the theory of types. All the paradoxes of self-reference disappear if you rule that propositions which refer to other propositions are of a different logical type from the propositions referred to. A hierarchy of logical levels is created. First-order propositions refer to the world outside the hierarchy. Any proposition which refers to a first-order proposition must be a second-order proposition. A proposition referring to a second-order proposition is a third-order proposition, and so on. So we can interpret what Epimenides the Cretan said as an attempt to assert a first-order proposition about a first-order proposition (itself). The assertion is either false—because Epimenides is not, as he claims, asserting a first-order proposition—or, more plausibly, illicit and therefore meaningless. These concepts, both language-levels and meaninglessness as a third alternative to truth and falsity, were entirely new in philosophy. Twenty years later, they became the foundations of logical positivism.

Russell was thirty-eight when he and Whitehead finished the *Principia.* Logic is a young man's profession, and his main work as a logician was now over. If he had died then, in 1910, he would have died a Wittgenstein; unknown to the general public, but with an immense and unalloyed reputation in the profession. In which case, would Wittgenstein have been a Wittgenstein?

Russell was disappointed by the reception of

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the *Principia*. He wrote once that he used to know of only six people who had read the later parts of it. (Schrödinger suggested that Russell and Whitehead had never read it themselves.) Indeed, it is the archetype of those monumental works which are often referred to with respect, but which are rarely read, and which exercise their influence on men's minds by some curious form of osmosis through the back of the skull. In the case of the *Principia* the reason is perhaps not just its length and difficulty. The book is a rare example of a philosophical program which has actually been put into effect. Many philosophers have suggested programs of systematization or analysis. What is interesting about them is not the results, but the methods proposed for getting them. (I suspect that it is the confusion of results with methods which makes Gellner complain about the dullness of modern linguistic philosophy. Galvanized iron nails may be boring, but the *process* by which they are manufactured may well be unique and full of interest.) It is Russell's fundamental logical insights—and above all the methods he devised for dealing with the difficulties cropping up along the road—which are the real fire at the heart of those three marmoreal volumes.

It was probably in the year after the completion of the *Principia* that Ludwig Wittgenstein arrived at Trinity. His paternal grandfather was a Jew who had been converted to Protestantism, his mother a Roman Catholic. His father was a steel magnate in Austria, and Wittgenstein himself had been trained as an engineer; at Manchester, where he had been studying, he had designed a form of jet aircraft engine. He was also an amateur musician, sculptor, and architect. He became interested in mathematical logic apparently through reading Russell's earlier book on the subject, the *Principles*, and at the age of twenty-two, on Frege's advice, he came to Cambridge to study under Russell.

At first Russell regarded him somewhat quizzically. He wrote in *Portraits from Memory*:

> He was queer, and his notions seemed to me odd, so that for a whole term I could not make up my mind whether he was a man of genius or merely eccentric. At the end of his first term at Cambridge he came to me and said: "Will you please tell me whether I am a complete idiot or not?" I replied, "My dear fellow, I don't know. Why are you asking me?" He said, "Because, if I am a complete idiot, I shall become an aeronaut; but, if not, I shall become a philosopher."

Although Russell was almost twice Wittgenstein's age, their relationship soon became one of equals, and in his obituary notice in *Mind* forty years later, Russell described getting to know Wittgenstein as "one of the most exciting intellectual adventures of my life." Later still, he wondered if perhaps it hadn't been a little too exciting. "Wittgenstein's doctrines influenced me profoundly," he wrote in *My Philosophical Development*. "I have come to think that on many points I went too far in agreeing with him."

These two men, who between them have dominated the philosophical thinking of the English-speaking world in the 20th century, present the most striking contrast in character. Russell—gregarious, witty, dramatic, outgoing; married four times; passionately interested in politics and society. Wittgenstein—costive, solitary, profoundly pessimistic; perpetually in flight from society, from fame, from the exegesis of his disciples; obsessed with sin and the proximity of madness. There is something decidedly comic about this disparity, and Russell's recollections of Wittgenstein at this period—though unfailingly generous in their appreciation of his "fire and penetration and intellectual purity"—mostly have a tone of humorous indulgence:

> He used to come to my rooms at midnight, and for hours he would walk backwards and forwards like a caged tiger. On arrival, he would announce that when he left my rooms he would commit suicide. So, in spite of getting sleepy, I did not like to turn him out. On one such evening, after an hour or two of dead silence, I said to him, "Wittgenstein, are you thinking about logic or about your sins?" "Both," he said, and then reverted to silence.

Wittgenstein did not remain in Cambridge very long. He withdrew to a hut in Norway; the first of many such retreats, some of them to Norway, or to a hut on the West Coast of Ireland, or to a hotel in Dublin. When the nightfall of World War I came down upon Europe, the two men lost sight of each other completely. Wittgenstein returned to Austria and volunteered for the army. Russell threw himself into his passionate opposition to the war, which took up most of his energies for the next four years. While he was in Brixton Prison, serving four months under the Defense of the Realm Act for a disparaging reference to the American army, he wrote another book on mathematical philosophy, on the last page but one of which is this moving footnote:

> The importance of "tautology" for a definition of mathematics was pointed out to me by my former pupil, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was working on the problem. I do not know whether he has solved it, or even whether he is alive or dead.

Wittgenstein was not only alive; he was still working on the problem as he served at the front. In August 1918—at almost precisely the same time that Russell was writing his footnote in Brixton—Wittgenstein went to Vienna on leave and finished writing what was later entitled the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, his first book, and one of the great cathedrals of Western philosophy. He had the manuscript of it in his pack when he was taken prisoner by the Italians, two days after the

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Armistice. From his prisoner-of-war camp at Monte Cassino he managed to send copies to Frege and Russell. Eventually he was released, after Russell had pulled strings, and the two men met at the Hague, where they went over the *Tractatus* together line by line.

In a way the *Tractatus* is the Word of Russell's logic made philosophical Flesh. It is based upon three fundamental ideas. One is what Russell called logical atomism—the notion that, logically speaking, the fundamental fabric of the world is not things or thoughts, but facts. These facts are the atoms of logic—mutually independent, located in logical space in the way that atoms of matter are located in physical space. The second idea is that facts are *pictured* by the propositions of language, so that the complex of facts is reflected in the complex of language, and the logical structure of language shows the logical structure of the world. The third idea is that any attempt to get outside this system, by trying to *say* what it is that language shows, or by trying to talk about the world as a whole, or by trying to use language in any of the extra-factual ways in which philosophers have to use it—including Wittgenstein himself even as he points this out—is condemned to meaninglessness.

Russell wrote an introduction to the English edition in which he suggested the idea of meta-languages as a way of avoiding this last difficult and implausible conclusion, remarking that "Mr. Wittgenstein manages to say a good deal about what cannot be said." Wittgenstein loathed the introduction, as he loathed almost every attempt to expound or explain his views, however sympathetic, and was persuaded only with difficulty to allow the book to be published.

He did not return to Cambridge after the war. He thought—with what one would have supposed was uncharacteristic optimism—that with the *Tractatus* he had solved all problems and brought philosophy to a close. He gave away the considerable fortune he had inherited from his father before the war, did a teacher's training course, and became a village schoolmaster in various parts of Lower Austria. From a village called Trattenbach he wrote gloomily to Russell: "The men of Trattenbach are wicked."

"All men are wicked," replied Russell urbanely, to which Wittgenstein wrote back: "True, but the men of Trattenbach are more wicked than the men of any other place."

Wittgenstein fell out with the authorities and gave up schoolmastering. For a time he worked as an assistant gardener in a monastery, contemplated becoming a monk, and designed a house for his sister in Vienna. Russell himself at this time was trying to reconcile those two ancient sparring partners, mind and matter. Russell's solution, which he called neutral monism, involved analyzing both into a common material—sensations. The physical world consisted of people's experience of it; people's minds were the history of that experience. Neutral monism shares the central assumption of Russell's earlier work, and of the *Tractatus*; it takes it for granted that doing philosophy involves analysis. The analogy is with science. Propositions can be broken down into their logically constituent parts, it is assumed, in the way that chemical compounds can be resolved into their elements, and molecules into their atoms. That philosophy was analysis came to seem almost a truism to most philosophers at the time. Later, it seemed as false as only a former truism can.

THE MOST DRAMATIC, and indeed violent, development from the techniques and concepts which Russell and Wittgenstein had evolved was undoubtedly logical positivism. In the hands of Moritz Schlick and the Vienna Circle, the *Principia* and the *Tractatus* were like Marxism in the hands of Lenin. The aim of the positivists was simple. It was to abolish metaphysics, and they did it with one exhilaratingly simple act of legislation. What gave statements meaning, they said, was the existence of a procedure for verifying them. If there was no way, even in theory, by which a statement could be checked, it was meaningless.

The concept of meaninglessness came from Russell, the picture of a world composed of facts from Wittgenstein. It was an authentic revolution; and like most revolutions, it destroyed too much. It swept away not only the vague profundities of the metaphysicians, but also the possibility of understanding ethics and aesthetics as anything more interesting than personal preferences, and most of the propositions of philosophy. These non-factual usages had to be reintroduced over the years, with tortuous complexity, through Russell's meta-languages. Instead of discussing the forbidden topics themselves, one was forced to speak of the lawfulness of statements made about them. A new casuistry grew up to replace the old; one cannot help thinking of the revolutionary commandments of Animal Farm, which got watered down from night to night, or perhaps of the Wee Cooper of Fife, who wouldn't beat his gentle wife, but put a sheepskin across her back and beat that instead.

In 1929, Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge. He submitted the *Tractatus* as a Ph.D. thesis, and underwent the formality of an oral examination upon it by Russell and Moore, to the embarrassment of all three of them. (According to Braithwaite, Moore's report to the degree committee concluded: "I myself consider that this is a work of genius; but even if I am completely mistaken and it is nothing of the sort, it is well above the standard required for the Ph.D. degree.") He began working at philosophy again, and commenced the celebrated lectures in his rooms at Trinity, to which his audience were expected to bring their own chairs and their own ideas.

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Now Wittgenstein's thinking began to undergo a radical change. In the *Tractatus* he had developed to its ultimate conclusion the classical view of language as a static construction which recorded what was or might be the case. Now he came to see that language was not a natural feature of the world which simply happened to exist, like the Alps; it was something dynamic and purposive—machinery designed and built to perform certain functions, to get things communicated. He came to think that the ways in which language could be used to communicate were very diverse, that the function of a piece of language was not always revealed by its apparent grammatical or logical form, and that the context in which words are uttered is often an inseparable part of their sense. He suggested that to find out how language meant what it meant, it was necessary to inquire into how it was used.

This view of language was entirely new, and it implied a new concept of the function to be performed by philosophy. The model of the syllogism as a pattern to which language and thought were to aspire, which had hung before philosophers' eyes since the time of Aristotle, had been suddenly bypassed. The anxiety which this model had led philosophers to feel about our knowledge of the world, and about how the world could possibly work if it didn't work like a syllogism, Wittgenstein treated as pathological. He saw philosophy as a way not of answering puzzles, but of curing puzzlement.

There is an obvious analogy here with psychoanalysis. The philosopher-patient asks a question. Wittgenstein replies: Why do you ask that question? He wishes to locate and allay the root anxieties from which the outward problems spring.* But the scientific air which philosophy had worn disappeared in Wittgenstein's hands. All the apparatus which it had up till then often shared with science—laws, proof, rigorousness, technical vocabulary, analysis procedures—were dispensed with. Wittgenstein's apparatus was analogy and metaphor, suggestion and persuasion, description designed to enable his hearers and readers to fix and order their most elusive experiences. What he brought out was the literary nature of philosophy.

Wittgenstein's morbid fear of being misunderstood and vulgarized made him keep his teaching as esoteric as possible. He dictated his thoughts to his disciples and colleagues, and circulated his texts among only a chosen few. He refused to allow his works to be published, and during his lifetime nothing was, except the *Tractatus* and one paper on logical form. *Philosophical Investigations*, the magnificent work in which he set forth his later thinking, did not appear until 1953, two years after his death. And yet by this time the English philosophical establishment was already well on the way to being thoroughly and completely converted to the new Wittgenstein.

Russell, however, remained among the unconvinced minority. He detested, and continues to detest, the whole of Wittgenstein's later work. He has written that Wittgenstein committed treachery to his own greatness, and that he debased himself before common sense in the way that Tolstoy debased himself before the peasants, from an impulse of pride. Wittgenstein's later philosophy, he says in *My Philosophical Development*, remains completely unintelligible to him.

> Its positive doctrines seem to me trivial and its negative doctrines unfounded. I have not found in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* anything that seemed to me interesting and I do not understand why a whole school finds important wisdom in its pages. Psychologically this is surprising. The earlier Wittgenstein, whom I knew intimately, was a man addicted to passionately intense thinking, profoundly aware of difficult problems of which I, like him, felt the importance, and possessed (or at least so I thought) of true philosophical genius. The latter Wittgenstein, on the contrary, seems to have grown tired of serious thinking and to have invented a doctrine which would make such an activity unnecessary.

These are harsh and wounding words. They are also sad ones. There is something unusually poignant in Russell's inability to acknowledge his pupil's greatest and most original work. Russell has spoken with characteristic frankness about his feelings. Wittgenstein, he says, began as his pupil and ended as his supplanter at both Oxford and Cambridge.

> It is not an altogether pleasant experience to find oneself regarded as antiquated after having been, for a time, in the fashion. It is difficult to accept this experience gracefully.

I SUPPOSE great men rarely feel much charity toward a schismatic pupil; they recognize too many of their own ideas being used to reach the unacceptable new conclusions. Wittgenstein's later work is a reaction against the excessive simplicism of traditional philosophy, particularly of his own views in the *Tractatus*. But in spite of its novelty, it has something in common with the *Tractatus*, and the logical positivism which in part derived from it—the assumption of the central importance of language, and of what can or can't be done with it; the feeling that language is not a mere superstructure, not something you can go round the back of, to see what the world behind really looks like.

This implies a radically new departure from the assumption which philosophers have usually made through the ages. They have tended to

* According to his pupil, Rush Rhees, Wittgenstein described himself as a "disciple" and "follower" of Freud. But he was also highly critical. Norman Malcolm, in his *Memoir*, records that Wittgenstein was greatly incensed by the suggestion that his philosophy was a form of psychoanalysis, and explicitly attacked it. I don't think this touchiness makes the analogy any less valid.

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think that the world could be understood aright only if language and thought were improved to reflect its structure more accurately. Get rid of its ambiguity and indefiniteness, they have urged, and we shall really see how things stand. What Wittgenstein grasped is that these aspects of language are not incidental flaws, but inherent characteristics without which language either cannot function at all, or cannot function as usefully as it does. Perhaps there is a parallel in another fundamental change of viewpoint which has occurred in this century—the revolution precipitated by Freud in our view of human nature. It used to be assumed that human beings could and should be fundamentally remodeled to fit the moral universe; the urgings of instinct and the appetites of the body could be trimmed away to reveal the ideal man within. Now we tend to feel more interest in reshaping our moral ideas to accommodate human beings as they are; our animal nature, as we now think, is an inherent part of our structure as vital organisms. Of course, moral ideas *were* adapted to human needs before Freud, and people still *are* expected to modify their behavior to meet moral codes. But there has been a change of emphasis. And so has there been in philosophy.

HISTORIANS may decide that this rise in the status of language is what chiefly characterizes the philosophy of our time. It seems paradoxical to trace the origin of this trend back to Russell, since he has always thought that language stood in need of analysis, and since he dismisses modern philosophers for being too much concerned with "the different ways in which silly people can say silly things." All the same, what made logical atomism plausible and attractive in the first place was certainly the success which Russell had with logic in the first decade of this century. And Wittgenstein's world of facts would surely never have been proposed if Russell had not demonstrated that propositions about being and existing—which direct our attention to what things are—could be dissolved into propositions about the incidence of properties—which suggest that the real question is *how things are disposed.* The *Investigations,* and the whole contingent, secular, relativistic world of modern philosophy, have their roots deep in the *Principia.*

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ANITA NOVINSKY
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THE LAST MARRANOS

WE ARRIVED IN the small village of Belmonte, Portugal, on a freezing morning in early November 1965. The village stands facing the Serra da Estrela, in the province of Beira Baixa, to the south of the city of Guarda; it has a population of about four thousand, and approximately fourteen-hundred dwellings. Belmonte is quite old; in the first years of the Portuguese monarchy, it was entirely surrounded by walls, and, like all such villages, had a small central square where the market was held and justice dispensed by the court. The narrow streets feeding into the square were inhabited by the gentry, clerics, Jews, merchants, common people, and villeins. In the Rua das Lages stood the "Sinagogue."

The Jewish population of Belmonte increased sharply at the end of the 15th century when the expulsion edict signed by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain forced a large number of Spanish Jews to seek refuge among their Portuguese brethren. Within a short period of time a compact nucleus of New Christians was formed—Jews who were constrained from practicing their religion by the persecution of the Tribunal of the Holy Office. These crypto-Jews, or Marranos, lived outwardly in accordance with the precepts of Catholicism, but among themselves, in the most absolute secrecy, they carried on the traditions of their forebears.

This state of affairs continued for nearly three hundred years. By the time the Inquisition was finally abolished, however, at the beginning of the 19th century, so many Marranos had been killed, or had emigrated, or had been assimilated, that they were spoken of as a curiosity, a forgotten element of Portugal's past. It was not until the end of the first quarter of the 20th century that Jewish historians and ethnologists in general became interested in the phenomenon of crypto-Judaism in Portugal; several communities of New Christians were discovered, whose members still lived and behaved exactly as they had under the Inquisition. One of the last known communities is Belmonte.*

WE CAME TO Belmonte with nothing but a name that was to serve as a point of contact. For some time, our efforts to enter the crypto-Jewish community were stymied. The New Christians, we were told, were "diffident." "They shut themselves up in almost ferocious silence." We were constantly being told that the person we were looking for was not available. "He leaves very early every morning, to go to market," some said, "and even if you found him he would not give you any information." Finally, through sheer accident, we met an inhabitant of Belmonte who revealed to us his Jewish origin and agreed to help us.

It was Friday afternoon. We were led along a narrow, unpaved road lined by old houses with warped doors and well-worn steps. We stopped at one of these houses, climbed a long and narrow flight of stairs, and entered a room that looked quite poor. A middle-aged woman came to meet us, eyeing us mistrustfully as we explained who we were. When our guide said, "They are one of us," her expression changed abruptly: her small, watchful eyes lit up, and, drying her hands on her apron, she begged our pardon for having received us in such a disheveled manner. It was the eve of the Sabbath, and she had had many things to prepare. She offered us a chair, and while she talked, the house began to fill up with people. Then she covered her head with a scarf, lit a lamp—they called this "the Lord's lamp"—and placing her hands over her eyes, said a prayer in a low voice. At that point, a very old woman, dressed in black and wrapped in a black shawl that covered her head, entered the room and approached us. When our presence was explained to her, she sat down and subjected us to a test. She asked us about the most diverse Jewish practices, and as we responded, she glanced furtively in the direction of her companions, making approving signs with her head. Finally she ordered us, rather peremptorily, to pray. This was to be final proof of our identity. Then, having at last recognized

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* Some of the earliest material published on Belmonte is to be found in Samuel Schwarz, *Os Cristãos Novos no Século* XX, Lisbon, 1925.

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us, they embraced us and kissed us on our cheeks.

HOW MANY New Christians are there in Belmonte? We were unable to ascertain the figure, although they themselves declared that there was a New Christian living in "every other house." The surnames we found most common were Henriques, Vas Morão, Nunes, Diogo, and Caetano, while among given names Moises, Ester, Sara, and Daniel predominated. We also came across a number of New Christians with names like Maria da Conceiçao, Antonio, or Abilio—obvious examples of Christian influence.

Although most New Christians are poor, there are no beggars in the crypto-Judaic community of Belmonte. The aged, of whom there are many, and the sick, live off the charity of their brethren. "A Jew," they told us proudly, "does not beg." Most of the New Christians are wandering tradesmen who deal in corn, oil, wool, fur, tanned leather, and fabrics, which they take to the fairs and markets of Northern Portugal. A few, formerly hawkers, have managed to become rich. The shops which they have opened in the village are generally well stocked with merchandise, which they sell to their poorer co-religionists on credit (the latter often resell such goods in the markets, and pay up whenever they can). Wealthier New Christians own their own houses, and even cars; they live at a certain distance from their former brethren, and some, through marriage to Christian women, have ascended to a higher social class. Their ascent is often accompanied by an abandonment of Jewish traditions, and though some of them continue to help their poorer relatives, in general they hold themselves aloof. The others, for their part, consider those who have departed the group as altogether lost to Judaism. They often speak of "we" and "they."

Among the small group of Belmonte New Christians whom we met were some whose appearance struck us as particularly strange and sickly. A New Christian who no longer lives with the group explained that the desire to retain their old religion and the fear of alien infiltration and denunciation have led these crypto-Jews over the years to intermarry to an extent which is now proving dangerous to their own survival. The human cost of this constant and vigilant endogamy has reached almost tragic proportions: the men and women are thin and weak, many of them are blind, feebleminded, or suffer from severe respiratory diseases. We saw ten-year-olds whose legs were not strong enough to carry them. So powerful is the tradition of closeness that the New Christians seem to have ignored altogether the dangers of consanguine marriages; they told us proudly, "We are pure, we marry only our cousins. . . ."

One New Christian who suffered obviously from the effects of intermarriage was a little man of delicate, almost beardless features, who was always to be seen in the company of his son, a boy of about fourteen. They were both almost blind, and led each other about with linked arms. Both father and son were inordinately shy and humble; the boy shrank into himself when we touched his cheeks. Like some sad youngster from the stifling ghettos of Eastern Europe, he seemed to live by himself in a little corner, completely oblivious to the world, bent on the practice of his ancient religion. When we saw the two of them again one night, at the house of one of their relatives, the father would not stop praying. Covering his eyes with his hands, he rocked back and forth, shaking his thin body as he intoned a holy melody.

We were also struck by a young girl whose delicate features were pale and colorless. Her eyes were a deep, transparent blue. She had difficulty breathing, and after each sentence had to stop to regain her breath. She had a child in her arms, whom she called "my little Daniel"; she asked us to send "a star of our people" for her child. Standing him on her lap, she kept pushing him toward us as we spoke to others in the room, asking over and over: "Doesn't he look like little Moses saved from the waters?"

ONE OF the more curious aspects of crypto-Judaism in Belmonte is the evidence of religious syncretism in the lives of the New Christians. Despite the Church's long-standing prohibition against contact between crypto-Jews and Christians, and despite the habits of discrimination which the Holy Office fostered for centuries among the Portuguese population, relations between the two groups were never completely severed. The poorer classes, of course, living in a climate of ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism, always regarded the New-Christian group as strange and different and unknown. But even this mistrust was overcome by the need for day-to-day human contact, or for mutual help in times of difficulty. And the effect of such prolonged daily contact has left its imprint on both religions, especially since crypto-Judaism developed in a period when every human action was regulated by religious considerations. Thus, for all the tenacity with which Jews held onto their faith, certain Christian influences did make themselves felt, at first individually, then later in ways which affected the general pattern of behavior in the entire group. Many traditions and customs which are typically Christian in character are also, we found, practiced by New Christians as well, just as some Jewish habits have been similarly incorporated into Christian practice.

One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon of religious syncretism is the love and veneration New Christians feel for "Holy Little Moses" (*Santo Moisesinho*) and "Holy Queen Esther." Every New Christian in Belmonte has a picture of one or the other hanging in his home. It is to the "Holy Little Moses" that New Chris-

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tians address their prayers, of him that they ask favors, and to him that they speak of their miseries. His picture reminded us strongly of the common image one has of Moses as a man no longer young, with a very dignified posture and a long white beard, and holding in his arms the "Tablets of the Law." Some have his picture hanging in their sitting-rooms, some in their bedrooms. A woman who said she herself was "old Christian"—as her family had been for generations—but who, for a reason unknown to herself, was called Sara, told us that she and her Jewish husband got along perfectly: at her bedside was an image of "Our Lady," and at his, one of "Holy Little Moses."

In some houses we also found a picture of the "Guardian Angel," with his white wings spread wide—decidedly a sign of Christian influence. Even the prayer addressed to the "Guardian Angel" is based on the Catholic cult:

Holy Angel of the Lord,
My careful keeper,
With you do I entrust myself to divine mercy
Who guards me always, reigns over me,
governs and illuminates me
Angel of my soul, angel good and true
I beg you, divine angel, be my loyal
companion. Amen.

Despite the effects of syncretism, however, New Christians are in general fiercely aware of their unique historical traditions. They know to the smallest detail, for instance, such central biblical stories as the Exodus from Egypt. Although they refer to the patriarchs and prophets as Saint Abraham, Saint Daniel, and so forth, they are nevertheless keenly cognizant of their own religious separateness, and of the experience of suffering and persecution which binds them to a unique Jewish past. "Our people were persecuted, much persecuted. . . ."

In general it is the old women who keep up the traditions, who know all the prayers and recite them to the assembled congregation at certain religious festivities. These prayers are all in Portuguese, and have been transmitted orally, from generation to generation, for the last four centuries. Since the community possesses no prayerbook, many prayers have been lost, and others have become incomprehensible. We observed that while they were reciting them to us, their memories occasionally failed them: they would repeat some passages over and over, having forgotten how to go on, and then they would start all over again. But they also noticed immediately when one of them made a mistake. Someone would correct the person reciting, another would interrupt, contradicting them both, voices would rise, and a quarrel would break out. (During one of these quarrels we were forced to intervene, when it appeared they would start to fight.) A young girl, of healthy Portuguese looks and rosy cheeks, full of enthusiasm, intoned for us one of the Psalms of David. We have translated it literally, as we recorded it, including those passages which are unintelligible even in Portuguese:

Psalm of David, sons of the Highest
Give glory and power unto Adonai
As he is seated then
As a king forever.
Adonai, strengthen your people
Your people, your people
With the peace of the dearly, dearly beloved
In the presence of your bride
Go to the Sabbath, to receive you
You have dwelled in the valley of tears
The Lord is my prior.
May we lie down in peace
May we get up full of life
To our king extend the peace
Blessed art thou, Adonai
Adonai makes altar, calves
Like liorne, *like* criones
Like ceriones, *like* ceriones
Like ceriones, *like* ceriones
The voice of Adonai is in the sanctuary
The Holy city in Jerusalem
Well thy dress
Thou hast dwelled in the valley of tears
The Lord is my Creator
Peace to our God, may we lie down in peace
May we rise full of life
To our king extend peace
Blessed art thou Adonai
Long live the great God Adonai
Long live the great God Adonai
Long live the great God Adonai

CERTAIN HABITS traditional among Jews are no longer practiced in Belmonte. Dietary laws, for instance, are almost unknown among the Belmonte New Christians; they have never heard of the prohibition against eating scaleless fish, and although they are aware that pork was forbidden to the Jewish people, today only the older people abstain from this food. No one, on the other hand, eats *murcela,* a blood-sausage common in the region.

One of the first Jewish precepts to disappear in Portugal was circumcision. As far back as the Inquisition, circumcision was observed only among the most religious and fanatical crypto-Jews, those who were not afraid to die for their faith. That all others gave the practice up is easy to understand: when arrested and submitted to questioning, one could always deny having fasted or lit candles at the coming of the Sabbath, or having worn clean clothes on Friday, or having performed any other similarly clandestine activity —but circumcision was undeniable proof of Judaism, and to this day it has not been reintroduced. When we questioned the New Christians of Belmonte about it, they seemed to understand what we were talking about, but only very vaguely, and it seemed to us that they preferred to avoid answering directly. Some said they had heard about the practice, but that it was not done there. We do not know, however, how closely this infor-

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mation corresponds to the actual truth, for we were also told by an Old Christian about a Christian young man, who, in order to marry a Jewish girl of the village, had been obliged to submit to an "operation."

With regard to their own rites and customs, however, the New Christians are strictly observant. A child is initiated into the practice of the Law at a very early age, and by the time he is seven is already required to fast on Yom Kippur. When we expressed our astonishment at this custom, they simply replied: "We too had to fast when we were seven, and it did not do us any harm. It is good for them to start getting used to following our Law. . . ."

Despite their deep aversion to the Church, the New Christians do frequent the local church for christenings and weddings, although the religious ceremonies performed there mean nothing to them; rather, they go exclusively to "keep the people from talking." The village is small, everybody knows everybody else, and it is easy for gossip to spread. Therefore, while they no longer fear saying they are Jews, they nevertheless marry in church so that no one might say of a couple that they are living together in sin. Still, the general custom is for the couple to be married first according to the Jewish Law. The ritual, which is of archaic simplicity, takes place at home. Both the bride and the groom fast on the wedding day, as do two friends of the groom and two unmarried girlfriends of the bride. At the end of the period of fasting, the prayers pertaining to the wedding ceremony are recited, and then a *rezadeira* (a woman whose function it is to say the prayers) ties the right hands of the couple together with a linen cloth, and intones the sacramental words: "In the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I unite you—fulfill your blessing." A table is then set, with a glass of wine, salt, and the "little holy bread," which is unleavened; the table faces an open window through which one can see the sky. At night a banquet is held with dancing, and the young couple eat and drink from the same utensils.

At wedding parties, as at other celebrations, the New Christians keep the doors and windows of their houses well closed, and take the greatest care that none of their neighbors see what is going on inside. No matter how friendly their relations with Christians, they will never reveal the manner in which they perform their ceremonies.

BURIAL CEREMONIES are very simple among the Belmonte New Christians. Immediately after death, the body is washed with spring water, which is fetched in a new clay pot at any time of day or night. The body is dressed in clothes that have not been worn before, and a silver coin is passed over the corpse's mouth and then given to a beggar. As the coin is passed over the mouth, the following prayer is recited three times:

You shall go to the valley of Josafath
And you shall meet a lion;
If he asks you for meat, give him bread;
If he asks you for the password,
give him money;
If he asks you of what Law you are,
Answer, of Moses's Law.
May he let you pass
Free and unharmed,
Wherever God lets you,
Wherever God sends you.
If he asks you who made you,
Tell him it was a Hebrew woman,
Who stays on in this world.
Who did for you what she knew,
Who did not for you what she should have.

On the way to the cemetery, the dead person's family disburses alms at every corner. One New Christian woman—one of the most strictly observant Jewesses we met—said to us, with sadness in her voice: "You have a cemetery for Jews only, but we don't." The New Christians of Belmonte finally come to rest under the cross.

Immediately following death, members of the bereaved family throw away all the water in the house, and cover all the mirrors with cloth—a custom that was even practiced, at considerable risk, during the centuries of the Inquisition. The house of the dead then becomes *trefle* (modification of the Hebrew *trepha*: impure), and until the following Sabbath its inhabitants are forbidden to eat any food remaining in it from before the death.

For the first eight days of mourning, the family of the dead person abstains from meat, and on the eighth and thirtieth days after the death they fast. Three months later, a third fast is held which is repeated every three months up to the end of the first year. On the seventh day of mourning, an abundant and carefully prepared meal, which omits meat and seasoning, is served to the poor; further such meals are served at the end of six and eleven months, and at the end of the first year. These are called "weal of the soul," and are served in crockery which is new or has been washed in ashes beforehand. At the end of the meal, the following prayer is recited three times:

The blessing that the Lord bestowed unto Zion, Zion bestowed unto Abraham, Abraham bestowed unto Israel, Israel bestowed unto his children, bestow now, O Lord, unto this table, this bread, unto all here present, who eat in abundance and among blessings. May it all be in honor of _____'s soul, and if he does not need it, may he share it with the needier souls, who stand close to him, in his duty. May the Lord have him in His glory, calm and light, and some place where he can beseech and implore the Lord for all his family. May the Lord free him of windy trees, burning olive trees, door hinges, shadows of walls, and bad people's tongues, of all troubles and perils the Lord should wish to free him of. Amen.

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On the day one of their number dies, all the crypto-Jews of Belmonte abstain from meat. If dinner is being prepared when the news arrives, the entire meal is immediately thrown away, and something else substituted. On certain days, one extra plate is placed on the table, and everyone puts a spoonful of food on it before eating. The extra dish of food is then given to a beggar.

As MIGHT BE expected, Yom Kippur is the most important of the holy days celebrated by the New Christians of Belmonte. Fasting begins at sunset the day before, in accordance with Jewish law, and ends the next evening, when the first stars appear. The ceremony starts with the lighting of the "Lord's lamp," which burns olive oil, and has a wick made of linen. Upon lighting the lamp, they say the following prayer:

> Blessed art Thou, my God, my Lord, my Adonai, that gavest and ordered us to holy orders, blessed and holy, that we light this wick to light up and celebrate this, the Lord's holy night, so the Lord will light our souls, and free us from sin and guilt. Amen, O Lord. May it rise to Heaven.

When we told the group that Jews in other countries no longer used lamps, but had candles instead, the women looked at us in great astonishment, and one little old lady made a gesture of disapproval. "Candles are for Christians," they explained. "We, the New Christians, do not use them." One woman, sympathizing with our plight, informed the group: "I know, they use candles because where they live they have no good oil or linen wicks."

The rituals of the "great day," or the "Lord's Day," as they call Yom Kippur, have been followed with rigorous severity ever since the days of the Inquisition. Even today, those New Christians who have married old Christians, live outside the restricted crypto-Jewish community, and have abandoned all Jewish traditions, still close the doors of their shops on Yom Kippur, and observe the fast.

Second in importance among New-Christian holidays is Passover, or the "Holy Feast," which is observed in Belmonte for seven days. During this time, the New Christians refrain from work and eat only unleavened bread, except on the first, fourth, and seventh days, which are full fast-days. The unleavened bread is made as follows: white sheets are spread out on the ground, on which are placed bowls containing flour and water for the dough. While the dough is being prepared, the "prayer of the Lord" is recited by the "prayer woman" and nine young girls. Then the dough is shaped into a single long cake, put on a new tile, and placed in the oven. After it has been baked, it is wrapped in a clean towel.

Passover is to this day observed in the most absolute secrecy. The unleavened bread is prepared in a house which is fairly isolated, where the New Christians feel safe from the eyes of their Christian neighbors. The eating of this bread is one of the customs that was observed even under the Inquisition, when persecutions were most ferocious, and the story is frequently told of a New Christian who once let it be known that leavened bread did not agree with him; he ate unleavened bread all year round so as not to be suspected of crypto-Judaism during the Passover season. In Belmonte today, the eating of unleavened bread is connected with a number of superstitions. When a New-Christian girl gets married, for instance, a special cake of this "holy bread" is prepared for her, which she keeps in a little box to the end of her life, for good luck.

During Passover the "Water Prayer" is recited daily:

On the fourteenth of the moon
Of the first month of the year,
The people of Egypt departed
With Israel their brother.
They sang songs
And praised the Lord
With all their hearts.
Where do you take us, Moses?
To this desert,
Where there is neither bread nor wine
Nor shepherds with their cattle?
Ask the Lord on high
That He take us to our homes.
Moses, with his rod held high,
Beat on the salty sea;
Twelve roads opened,
To let his people pass.
They passed, safe and sound,
For the Lord ordered it so
They passed through the Red Sea,
Toward the promised land.
The people, afflicted by thirst,
Cried to heaven for water;
Moses goes ahead,
His holy rod held high.
As the Lord ordered him
He beat on a bitter stone,
And the clear water flowed.
Blessed be the Lord,
And forever praised;
From a stone He made water flow
For the greatly afflicted people.
Moses, holy prophet,
Liked and loved by the Lord,
Emperor of the nation,
Destroyer of Egypt,
Ask for mercy
Of that infinite God
May His weal reach us,
And may He take us to His Kingdom
And free us from captivity;
Know, brethren of this brotherhood,
The Lord created the four elements:
Dust, wind, water, the shadow of walls;
As He freed us
From such great perils,
May he free us from our enemies.
May the Lord keep from us
Troubles and perils

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And when under attack
May we be victorious
And our enemies defeated. May God
allow this to be so,
And the angels say Amen.
Amen, O Lord. May it rise to heaven
and to heaven return.

During this holiday, the New Christians often go out on picnics where they pray and dance. On the last day of Passover, the whole community gathers at a stream, and chants in unison:

Let us praise and exalt the high God
of Abraham
May He free us from the great sea,
And take us to the Promised Land.

Each person carries an olive branch in his hand, and as he beats the water with it, in celebration of the crossing of the Red Sea, he recites:

The sea opened itself, the people passed
through
The God of Israel had commanded it to
be so.

On the way home they pray:

Let us praise and exalt the High God of
Israel,
Who freed us from the high sea and that
cruel king.

ANOTHER HOLIDAY kept by the New Christians is "The Feast of Queen Esther," or Purim. Their observance consists of fasting for one day, and reciting the "Prayer of the Lord" three times before a lit lamp. As they pray, they turn to the picture they have hanging on the wall, which they take to be of the Holy Queen Esther.

One woman told us she still remembered her mother-in-law celebrating the *Festa das Cabanas.* (Hut Feast, Sukkot). "My man always asks me," she said, " 'Say, woman, why don't you celebrate the "hut feast"?' " But neither she nor the other Belmonte New Christians knew when, or how, it is observed.

As we have already pointed out, New and old Christians live together in friendship. They visit one another, exchange gifts, and help each other in times of need. But in matters of religion they keep completely apart. One New-Christian woman, who had already been married by the Jewish ritual, told us that she intended to invite one of her Christian neighbors to be her bridesmaid at her "second" wedding in the Church; she said she loved her neighbor like a sister, but would not think of letting a Christian woman be present at a Jewish wedding. Some members of the group, particularly the elderly, remain fearful of contact with Christians. Understandably, they are most afraid of losing the younger generation through intermarriage. One woman told us that her son, who had finished his eighth year in school, now had "foolish ideas in his head," for he wanted to marry a girl who was not of their people.

Thus, despite the friendship which prevails between the New-Christian group and the rest of the local population, the New Christians are still wary, still nourish a certain fear of being betrayed. When we told them about the freedom that Jews now enjoy, and about the State of Israel, they accused us of being naive. How could we say things like that, they wanted to know, when only a very short time ago a man had had spies infiltrate the Jews, to discover their origin, and then had had them all arrested, and their children burnt in an oven? The woman who told this story spoke in a loud voice, her eyes flashing, her fists clenched. "Who told you that?" we asked. "Our cousin, who knows all those stories, who has already been to Porto, and seen a 'synagogue' from close by!"

Clearly, the New Christians of Belmonte take inordinate pride in their Jewish past, and in their unique historic consciousness. "Our people," they relate, "came from very far away, a very long time ago, from a place called Palestine. . . ." Indeed, their pride has even led them to reject the new way of life practiced by their coreligionists elsewhere in the world, as well as elsewhere in Portugal itself. They consider themselves purer than the Jews from Porto or Lisbon, who, according to what they have heard, practice the religion of Moses in a "falsified" manner. They alone remain pure, and follow their religious teachings properly. "Our Law is the most beautiful in the world; we will not change it, not even if we have to die for it."

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THE MONKEY TRIAL

Joseph Wood Krutch

THE MONKEY TRIAL at Dayton, Tennessee took place more than forty years ago. Few of us who were actually present survive and by now the events are more a part of the folklore of liberalism than of history. Most people who have any notions about the trial got them from the play, *Inherit the Wind*, or from the movie. But the play was written more than a generation after the event and its atmosphere is that of the 40's and 50's, not that of the 20's. This makes for falsification because one of the most striking facts about the whole foolish business is just that it was so characteristic of the 20's and could hardly have taken place in just that way at any time before or since.

The authors of *Inherit the Wind* made it chiefly sinister, a witchhunt of the sort we are now all too familiar with. But though the Monkey Trial had sinister aspects that I have no desire to minimize, it was also a farce in which none of the intended victims was ever in any serious danger and over which H. L. Mencken gloated because he considered it the perfect embodiment of that extravagant absurdity which he thought the most characteristic and the most enjoyable aspect of the United States. The Bible-belt zealots were exhibiting themselves as hilarious boobs. That the trial could be a farce, even a farce with sinister aspects, is a tribute to the 20's when, whatever the faults and limitations of that decade, we did not play as rough as we play today.

Forget the legend and consider the facts. The bill forbidding the teaching of evolution was introduced by a fundamentalist rustic who probably thought he was protecting the Christian religion. It was passed by the two houses of the legislature, each of which thought it would be vetoed by the other, and then sent to the governor who said in effect that he was not going to be the only one to lose votes in the back country. He added, after he had signed the bill: "Probably the law will never be applied. It may not be sufficiently definite to permit of any specific application or enforcement. Nobody believes that it is going to be an active statute." Though the law has never been repealed, no one, so far as I know, has ever been charged with violating it since the time of the Dayton trial, and it is almost certain that Scopes, who was a willing defendant, would himself never have been charged if it had not been upon the insistence of opponents of the law who wanted to make a test case—for frivolous as well as for serious reasons.

Certainly most of the legislators who passed the absurd law hoped that it would be quickly forgotten and the whole affair swept under the rug. But a local businessman from the East who had become increasingly irritated by the antics of the fundamentalists asked John Scopes, a high-school coach, teacher of the physical sciences, and temporarily substituting for the biology teacher, if he would consent to be the principal in a test case. Scopes was the son of an old-time socialist and himself a mild liberal. He had the courage to agree. The offer of assistance from the Civil Liberties Union might never have been accepted had William Jennings Bryan not heard of the case and volunteered to appear for the prosecution. Thereupon the Union gathered a remarkable team: Clarence Darrow, whose appearance and manner might be expected to soothe the prejudices of a rural community; Arthur Hays, who was well versed in legal technicalities; John Neal, an eccentric but able lawyer from nearby Knoxville; and Dudley Field Malone, a silver-tongued divorce lawyer whose eloquence was expected to rival that of Bryan in a style not too unlike Bryan's.

The little town of Dayton behaved on the whole very well. Though ostensibly at least all on the side of the prosecution, many of the businessmen were frankly delighted that their town was going to be put on the map as the place where one of the greatest questions of the day would be debated by world-famous visitors. The atmosphere was so far from being sinister that it suggested a circus day. Street-corner pitchmen as well as street-corner preachers of every sort held forth. Newspapermen converged from all over the nation. While all the other principals and reporters gathered every day in the village drugstore, only the "Great Commoner" kept aloof. He was seen only occasionally driving through town in the traditional big black limousine; the one and only time he came into the drugstore he was plainly not amused when the soda jerker asked if he would have grape juice—a pleasantry which may not be meaningful today, when Bryan's promotion of that innocent beverage has been forgotten.

As for the trial itself, it soon turned into a debating society in which the whole question of fundamentalism versus modern scientific skepticism was aired. The jury was present for perhaps fifteen minutes of the entire time, having been banished during the debate which, technically, was entirely irrelevant to the guilt of the defendant who admitted freely that he had taught evolution—whatver that might mean.

So much for the events and the atmosphere surrounding them. Now consider the results. Scopes was quite properly declared guilty and assessed a fine of a hundred dollars. Later, the Supreme Court declared a mistrial on a technicality and refused to permit a retrial. Thus it was all in all a strange sort of witch trial, one in which the accused won a scholarship enabling him to attend graduate school and the only victim was the chief witness for the prosecution, poor old Bryan, already long past his day, reduced to selling Florida real estate, and actually given the *coup de grâce* at Dayton. He had come

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there hoping he might still seem impressive in the backwoods, but the feebleness of his position embarrassed even those who had come to hear him triumph and he got less applause in a supposedly friendly courtroom than Malone did.

The high point of the trial came when Bryan denied that man is a mammal (apparently because he did not quite know what the word meant) and it was at this moment that the delighted Mencken fell off the table he had mounted to get a better view of the proceedings. Mencken, I suspect, planned his tumble for the same reason that the father of Benvenuto Cellini slapped his son when they both had the luck to see a salamander—in order, that is, that the event should not be forgotten. Thus the only real victim of this strange witch trial was the chief witness for the prosecution, who was not only obviously discomfited but whose sudden death a few days later may well have been hastened by his chagrin. H. L. Mencken wrote one of his best pieces—"In Memoriam W. J. B."—and in a private letter he said: "God aimed at Darrow, missed, and hit Bryan instead. Earth's loss is Heaven's gain." It is impossible not to speculate on what would have happened had it been Darrow who died within a few days of the end of the trial. Such an event would certainly have seemed to the fundamentalists more than compensation for the failure of their champion to win the debate and for what they knew to be the empty victory of Scopes's conviction.

SCOPES'S RECENTLY published *Center of the Storm**—the clear, simply written, and modest story of a simple, honest, and modest man—is valuable for two reasons. For one thing, it gives a very accurate account of the events as I remember them and corrects the impression made by the play and the movie. In the second place, it tells something about the subsequent career of the young man who was, as his title suggests, at the center of the storm even though he played only a passive part in the whole affair. This is something which I know almost nothing about despite my somewhat special interest and I suspect that it is also known to few. Mr. Scopes used his scholarship to study geology, worked for a time with an exploring group in South America, and then, after a serious illness contracted there, for the National Gas Company in Texas. He is now sixty-five years old and, oddly enough, nominally a Catholic convert though he states explicitly that he joined the Catholic Church only in order to avoid embarrassment and difficulty when he married a Catholic.

As to the sinister aspects of the trial, it is for the most part the fact that those who should have known better were too cowardly to oppose an absurd and dangerous law. A few years earlier, a similar law had been proposed in Kentucky but voted down, largely because the State University spoke out against it and because the legislators were ready to risk the disapproval of the least enlightened citizens. In Tennessee nearly everybody, including the official spokesman for the University as well as the legislators, ran for cover and the editor of one of the two Knoxville newspapers denounced me in an editorial headed, WE ARE NOT PROUD OF HIM.

On this sinister aspect I would like permission to quote a passage from the report which I wrote at the time in the *Nation:*

> I feel that the shame of Tennessee is not in Dayton. There is no state of the Union, no country in the world, which does not have communities as simpleminded as this one, and if Tennessee has become the laughingstock of the world it is not because she has her villages which are intellectually a half century behind the centers of world thought but rather because among her sons who know better there is scarcely one who has the courage to stand up for what he thinks and knows instead of flying quickly to cover lest he might have to sacrifice to his convictions some political advantage or some material gain.
>
> At Dayton no one is afraid to tell me what he thinks. But when I go to Knoxville, the seat of the State University and one of the three largest cities in Tennessee, I enter a different world. One of the most important members of the University Board of Trustees takes me aside to whisper in my ear; the president of the institution, telling me I am a good fellow, takes me confidentially by the arm; the editor of one of the leading newspapers, distinguished for the safe piety of his editorials on the subject, closes the door of his office. And the remarks of all might be summarized in what were the actual words of one: "Of course, it is a damned fool law—but I won't be quoted." These and other Knoxvillians are defensive and indignant; they resent in various terms the publicity they have attracted and they protest against being judged by the laws their legislature passes; but these Knoxvillians will not admit that, fundamentally, they are to blame. In Tennessee bigotry is militant and sincere; intelligence is timid and hypocritical, and in that fact lies the explanation of the sorry role which she is playing in contemporary history. Dayton's only crime is the naive belief that a law may be intended to be enforced.

*By John T. Scopes and James Presley, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 277 pp. $5.95.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH, *one of our most eminent and versatile men of letters, is the author of* The Modern Temper, Samuel Johnson, The Desert Year, *and many other books.*

* * *

WHAT CAN THE UN DO?

Ronald Steel

A PILE OF new books on the United Nations* is usually enough to drive even the most public-spirited man to his Ian Fleming. After all, what can be said about the UN that hasn't been said a thousand times before? And if anything new could be said, what difference would it make? The UN seems here to stay, its longevity assured by the fact that it knows its place. It has not been allowed to interfere with the vital interests of

*_This Kind of Peace_ by T. R. Fehrenbach, McKay, 402 pp., $6.50; _The Play Within the Play_ by Hernane Tavares de Sa, Knopf, 309 pp., $5.95; _The Glass House_ by James J. Wadsworth, Praeger, 224 pp., $4.95; _The United Nations: Peace and Progress,_ by Alf Ross, Bedminster, 443 pp., $8.00; _The United Nations and the Superpowers_ by John G. Stoessinger, Random House, 206 pp. $3.95.

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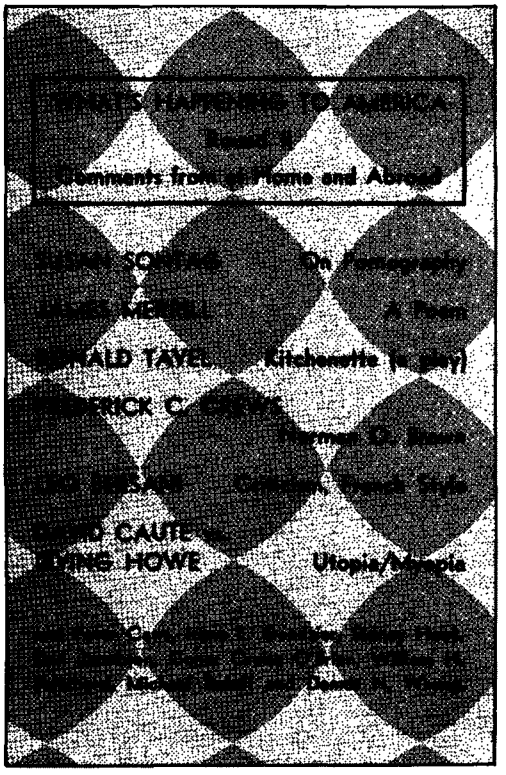

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the super-powers, nor to intervene in areas where world peace is really threatened. Except for the lunatic fringe of Maoists and Birchites, the UN has no real enemies. Liberals sing its praises, conservatives accept it as a minor inconvenience, and virtually everyone agrees with U Thant's recent assurance of "how much sorrier a state the world would now be in if the United Nations had not existed."

It is, of course, easy to take the name of the UN in vain, but few people would be tempted to dispense with it altogether. It is too useful, too sacrosanct, and, when it comes to the really crucial issues, too irrelevant. Therein lies the secret of its success. It has won the world's heart because it has not stepped on any powerful nation's toes—or at least not hard enough to do any damage. Having settled for weakness as the price of survival, the UN has been absorbed into the world power structure. Why attack it for not being more than it is, when what it is serves most people's interests so well? If the UN did not exist, we would have to invent it, and what we would invent would probably be very much like what we have today. This is the tragedy of the UN, and also the reason for its endurance.

However, the fact that we are stuck with the kind of UN we deserve does not prevent us from yearning for something better, or from berating the failure of the organization to live up to our own romantic expectations—expectations which would probably horrify us if they were ever realized. We are all victims of our own illusions about what the UN is supposed to be, and we make the UN itself the scapegoat for our disappointments. This is illustrated by T. R. Fehrenbach who, in arguing for more realism about the role and the powers of the UN, fails to apply his own analysis. Unable to free himself from the assumption that the real value of the UN lies in its usefulness as an instrument of American foreign policy, he has written a book which is less interesting as an analysis of the UN than as an example of the confusion and conflicting motives most Americans bring to the subject. A staccato-like scenario of the cold war, filled with glib generalizations and rather simplistic conclusions, *This Kind of Peace* contains little that might help to explain the part the UN has or might have in maintaining any kind of peace.

As an exposé of an organization that hardly needs exposing, Mr. Fehrenbach's book falls short even of the high-level gossip provided by Hernane Tavares de Sa, a disgruntled Brazilian who was formerly head of the UN information services. A born storyteller, Senhor Tavares vents his spleen—deftly, but often with tiresome pettiness—on the foibles of the UN and those who run it. *The Play Within the Play* suffers from being confined to the limits of non-fiction. The author's malicious tongue and gift for dialogue qualify him for writing a delightful novel, or even a real play. Now that Senhor Tavares is free from the confinements of Turtle Bay, one hopes that he will use these gifts to write the dramatic farce which he sees the UN as exemplifying. Surely the organization deserves its Alan Drury, and Senhor Tavares is more than well-equipped for that role. As it stands, however, the comic impact of his "inside story of the UN" is weakened by his unfortunate attempts at political analysis.

On a more serious level, James J. Wadsworth, who at one time served as American representative to the UN, also provides the reader with an insider's view, one which makes up in sincerity what it lacks in wit. In emphasizing such non-political aspects of the UN as the technical assistance program, UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF, and WHO, *The Glass House* helps put the organization into perspective and to remind us that for much of the world's population the UN stands for economic and social progress rather than for the political millennium. The shortcomings of the UN as a peace-keeping organization have tended to obscure some of its real achievements in the field of economic and social affairs—which comprise about three-quarters of its activities. For the press, to be sure, "the pounding of a shoe reverberates with a hundred times more decibels than the feeding and care of millions of children." Whatever its other shortcomings, however, the UN has been dispensing a considerable amount of foreign aid, and that is perhaps the most useful thing it could do.

The idea that the real role of the UN is that of a global welfare agency strikes many people as irreverant, or even as subversive of the UN's high political ambitions. Those who live in the prosperous countries of the West are not likely to be aware of the effects, or even existence, of the UN's welfare and technical assistance programs, and thus tend to see the organization entirely in political terms. Unless it punishes aggressors, keeps the peace, and sows the seeds of world government, such people assume that the UN is clearly failing in its task. But this merely reveals their own preoccupations. Every country has its own view of the proper function of the UN. The United States wants to use it to contain Communism and to smother left-wing revolutions. The Europeans see it as a useful forum for the airing of grievances and as a convenient center for diplomatic contact among nations. The Russians view it as a necessary evil in which they must participate, lest the "imperialists" monopolize it. And the economically backward ex-colonial states cling to it as the instrument by which they can make their anxieties felt and can shame the wealthy nations into providing more economic assistance. Every country, then, wants to use the UN for its own purposes, and those who fail to recognize this fall victim to their own mythology.

Professor Alf Ross, a Danish philosopher of international law, has no illusions about the motives that inspire the member-states of the UN, nor does he betray much sentimentality about the organization's utopian ambitions. Nevertheless, he thinks that the UN can be a significant instrument for allowing the major powers of the world to defend their interests by means less primitive than periodic

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slaughter. He argues that unless the great powers have a vested interest in preserving the UN, and unless it can be made relevant to the necessities of their own diplomacy, the UN cannot hope to survive. To breathe new life into the UN, Professor Ross would therefore have it transformed into a benevolent dictatorship by which the great powers keep the peace. With impressive scholarship, with clarity and felicity of style, he presents his case that world peace, if it ever comes, will more likely be achieved through a dictatorship of the super-powers than through majority voting in the General Assembly. Thus Professor Ross would reform the UN in accordance with the intention of its founders by establishing a great-power directorate in the Security Council. Despite its rather ponderous title, *The United Nations: Peace and Progress* is an engaging and highly informative work by one of the more serious scholars who have tried to cope with the woes of the international organization.

Given the inability of the great powers to agree on much of anything over the past twenty years, Professor Ross's prescription for great-power unanimity may sound utopian, but it is based on the assumption that the super-powers have a common interest in preventing the UN from being used in a manner detrimental to themselves. This view is confirmed by the increasing tendency of America and Russia to deal with their differences privately, rather than to drag them into the UN, where they are subject to the scrutiny, the diatribes, and the adverse votes of the mini-powers. Over the past few years, there has been a steady movement away from the General Assembly, where the super-powers have to lobby for the votes of states like Chad and Malawi, and back to the Security Council, where they enjoy the prerogatives of the veto. Perhaps it is too late for a great-power dictatorship such as Professor Ross favors, for the super-powers no longer rule the world as they did a decade or two ago, and there are now a good many matters about which they cannot hope to do much more than agree to disagree. But they do share a real disenchantment with the General Assembly, where every nation enjoys an equal vote. Even the United States, which tried to augment the powers of the General Assembly so long as it enjoyed a majority of votes there, has increasingly of late come to look upon the Security Council with new affection.

Up to now the United States has been able to avoid using the veto in the Security Council. Its abstinence, however, stems less from respect for principle than from the ability to protect its interests in other ways so effectively that the UN has rarely dared to approve resolutions considered unfriendly to Washington. Anyone entertaining any illusions about the role of the United States within the UN will find them ably demolished in John G. Stoessinger's *The United Nations and the Superpowers*, a compact and enlightening study of great-power interactions in the world organization. The author, a professor of political science at Hunter College, is well aware that America has at times seen fit to support an expansion of the powers of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, but he points out that there are also periods "when the American interest dictates a more conservative role for the UN." In the past, therefore, "the United States has employed the hidden veto [pressure in the General Assembly], attacked the Secretariat, prolonged the membership stalemate, fought for the exclusion of Red China, withdrawn support from the IRO [International Refugee Organization], bypassed the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency], and attacked the unanimity principle of the Special Fund."

But according to Mr. Stoessinger, such moves—as well as those undertaken by Russia to protect her national interests—have strengthened rather than harmed the UN; they have forced it to develop its own political resources for circumventing the great-power impasse. The UN, he argues, "has moved forward *because* of the super-power struggle as well as in spite of it." He sees the UN as a pawn which "has had to learn to live between the giants and, ultimately, to capitalize on that position." By so doing, he believes, it may continue to augment its strength and perhaps one day become a powerful political force.

IF, HOWEVER, the UN were to develop such power, would it be a force for peace or for greater instability? To make the UN relevant as a political body is to give it political power, and this can be done only at the sufferance of the great powers. But is a great-power dictatorship any more likely to secure the peace than great-power antagonisms held in check by a balance of forces? And if the great powers should refuse to play such a role, can the disparate member-states of the UN evolve any system that is more likely to approximate international justice than the current system? Those who would augment the political effectiveness of the UN, who would endow it with an independent army and vastly expanded "peace-keeping" powers, usually fail to come to terms with the likely consequences of such a move. It would mean either the collusion of the great powers and, in effect, the imposition of a great-power dictatorship—which has been tried before and has failed—or it would mean that the great powers would be willing to allow a majority in the General Assembly to impose its will on recalcitrant minorities. Yet to accept this is to endow the member-states of the UN with virtually unlimited powers to punish a nation even for its domestic policies.

The problem inherent in this punishment power is being dramatized today in the case of Rhodesia, whose internal policies are repugnant to a majority of nations in the General Assembly. For this reason, Rhodesia has been declared a "threat to the peace," thereby permitting Chapter VII of the Charter to be called into use. Under this provision the UN has, for the first time in its history, made economic sanctions obligatory upon all UN members, and even upon non-members. A failure to observe such sanctions is thus a violation of international law. These are extraordinary powers, and, if followed to their logical conclusion, would result in the

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dispatch of a UN "peace-keeping" force to subdue the government of Rhodesia.

Since it is exceedingly unlikely that economic sanctions will succeed in bringing down the Smith regime, there will probably be demands from the General Assembly for more stringent action: for a blockade of South Africa and the Portuguese territories to plug the holes in the embargo. The African nations, incapable of providing such a blockade themselves, must call upon the great powers to do so. Is the United States willing to blockade South Africa, Angola, and Mozambique? Is it willing to support the invasion of Rhodesia by an African army wearing UN helmets? Is it willing to dedicate itself to the overthrow of governments because their internal policies are repugnant to a majority in the General Assembly, or to the views of most Americans? If so, why single out Rhodesia, whose racist policies, however obnoxious, are no more obnoxious than the domestic policies of many of the nations which voted for sanctions?

What is involved here is not a principle, but an act of expediency. Sanctions were imposed upon Rhodesia because the British government has been incapable of either defeating the Smith regime or coming to terms with it. In desperation, it therefore turned to the UN, where nations which are unable to agree on anything else are able to form a majority to denounce white colonialism. The UN has allowed itself to be used as a dumping ground for London's failure, and has responded with a gesture that could conceivably set the stage for a race war in southern Africa.

After having shown its inability to deal with such real threats to the peace as the Berlin crisis, Suez, Budapest, and Vietnam, the UN has now bravely pounced upon Rhodesia and has unleashed its vast legal powers to punish her as a "threat to the peace." While bombs are falling and people are dying in Vietnam, while millions are suffering from malnutrition, while uncontrolled population growth breeds misery, frustration, and perhaps future aggression, the UN has decided that the real danger to the peace of the world is a government in Salisbury which will no longer accept instructions from London. By the kind of irony that is becoming the hallmark of the UN, the very nations which so pride themselves on their anti-colonialism are trying to punish Rhodesia for refusing to behave like a colony.

Before we lend our own power to the support of such actions, we would do well to ask whether they might not be a greater threat to the peace than the policies of the government they are designed to punish. Then, too, we ought to ask ourselves whether we would ever be willing to tolerate this kind of intervention in our own internal affairs.

By using Chapter VII to interfere in a nation's domestic policies, the UN might well be laying the ground for a crisis within its own ranks. Gestures against a small and friendless state like Rhodesia are cheap, but to expand the powers of the UN in this way is to make the organization itself an instrument of aggression by temporary majorities. Intervention in a nation's domestic affairs rarely ensures justice; in many cases it is likely to furnish the pretext for the imposition of puppet governments by the great powers, or for the kind of military conflagration that the UN is supposedly designed to prevent. The justification of intervention as a way of helping a lawful government deal with its internal problems—or of forcing it to deal with its problems in a manner congenial to the intervening powers—is, as Alf Ross comments, "one of the most unfortunate principles of international law of our time," for it "opens the way for infiltration and camouflaged invasions."

THE UN CHARTER is flexible, to be sure, but it cannot be stretched too far without endangering the existence of the organization itself. If the UN should founder, the small nations would be the ones to suffer, not the great ones, for it is the mini-powers that benefit most from the UN. It gives them a forum to express their grievances and, what is more important, it provides the technical assistance on which they are so dependent. The UN is a luxury for the great powers, which use or ignore it at their pleasure. It is, however, a necessity for the small powers, for without it they would have an even harder time than they do now in making their presence felt and their wishes known. Basically, the UN is their organization, but unless they are willing to show a sense of restraint about the use of its political powers, they may well provoke the very crisis that could lead to its demise.

The UN ought to survive because its virtues are numerous, its idealism desirable, and its drawbacks—so far—minimal. The world deserves something better than the deification of the nation-state, and if the UN can provide the possibility of an alternative, it merits our continuing sympathy and support. But the price of survival in this world is relevance. Unless the UN is able to bring its actions into line with its principles, and unless it can be made into something more than the plaything of the super-powers and the instrument of irresponsible mini-powers, it may suffer the fate of its predecessor. This would be regrettable and perhaps even tragic. But it would be even more tragic to allow the UN to be twisted into an arbitrary international gendarmery which places small and defenseless nations at the mercy of great-power opportunists and mini-power Machiavellis.

Today it is Rhodesia's turn to have the vast legal powers inherent in the UN Charter applied against it by states whose domestic policy is, in many ways, no better than her own. Tomorrow it could be the turn of other isolated and weak states such as Portugal—or Israel. The precedent is a dangerous one that liberals, idealists, and even one-worlders should be wary of. It may be important to make the UN powerful. It is even more important to ensure that it does not use its potential power to enforce a tyranny of the majority.

RONALD STEEL's *articles about politics and world affairs have appeared frequently in* COMMENTARY, *as well as in other journals. Mr. Steel is the author of* The End of Alliance *and the forthcoming* Pax Americana, *which Viking will bring out in June.*

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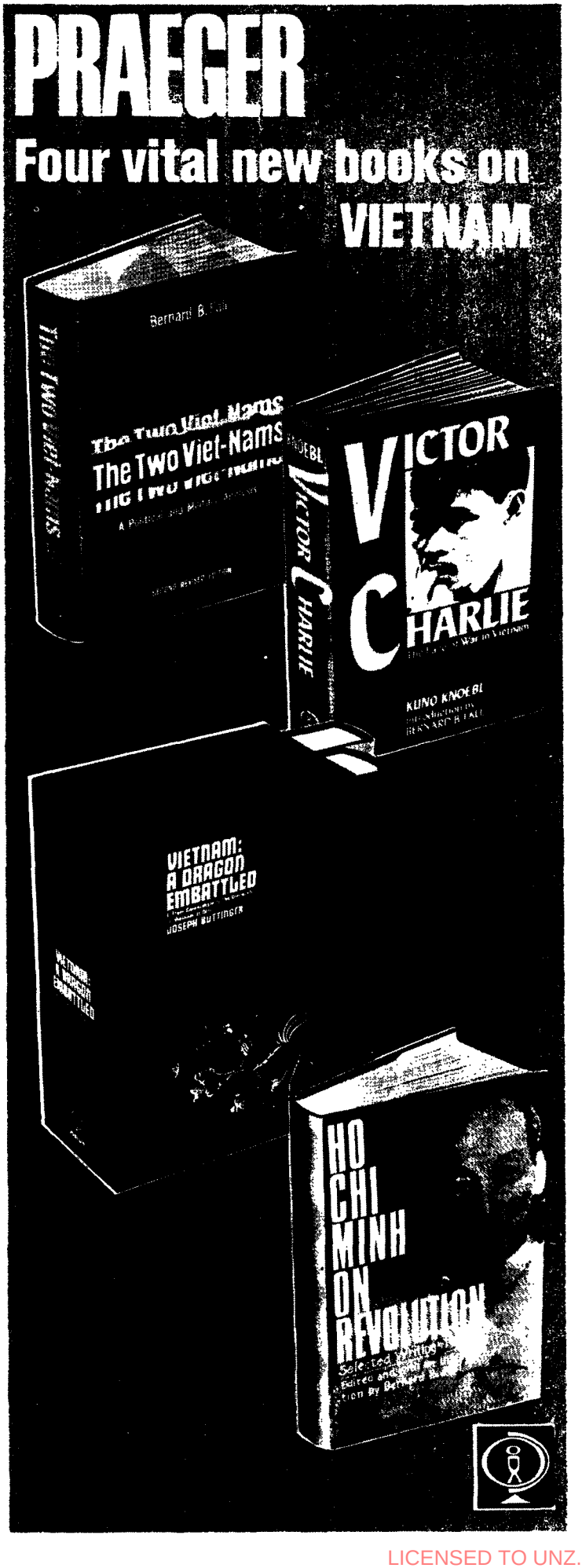

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MEYER LIBEN IS one of those writers who come, as it were, out of the blue. A businessman who retired early because of illness, he began a second career as a writer when he was in his forties and has waited another ten years for the publication of his first book. Certain advantages have followed from this late start. Liben remains an amateur in spirit, though not in performance: he writes because he likes to write, because it is his natural way of expressing himself, of keeping track of the flow of experience, of situating himself in the world. Though an experimental writer, he has none of the mannered obscurity one associates with the term: in technique, his experiments are rather simple, homey ones—an open conversational form, somewhere between narrative and essay, punctuated by headings at the transitional points like the subtitles of the old silent movies. (His fiction somewhat resembles that of Paul Goodman, though Goodman has told me that the indebtedness is his.) It is as though Liben one day dropped in on Literature, found that it was a pleasant place to spend his time, and, having passed the age of intimidation, rearranged the furniture just a bit to make himself more comfortable.

The other main advantage of Liben's belated career is that he comes on the scene after his generation has more or less had its say and left the floor to the succeeding one. In his accent as well as in his subject matter, Liben belongs to the marginally middle-class world of the second generation of East-European immigrants. This makes him unfashionable and, at times, a bit dated; but it also makes him fresh and salutary by virtue of his ability to restore a dimension of his generation's character that has been obscured in recent years: the dimension of depth.

The sense of the second generation one has today tends to be no more than a stack of tendentious and superficial images, minted in retrospect from the coin of its present prosperity. Whether created by his apologists, such as Harry Golden, or by his assailants, the second-generation Jew is, at bottom, a pretty gross figure: the compleat bourgeois businessman, still a little anxious, perhaps, but basically at ease in the suburbs. Whether hailed as a hero of individual and group enterprise or bitterly criticized as a materialist and a cop-out, the second generation has suffered a reduction of its experience: the struggle of the 1920's to get out of the ghetto and to get the ghetto out of oneself, the social and political intensities of the Depression years, the trauma of the Holocaust—all these have become, in one way or another, merely stages along the route to Great Neck. All the vulgarity belongs to the second generation, all the sensitivity to the third; all the complacency to the second, all the crises to the third. And, recently, all the struggle, spirit, and color to the first. Under the spell of phony nostalgia and devious revenge, as well as of writers such as Singer and Malamud, my generation seems to be cultivating the idea that the only authentic Jews are the impoverished, bizarre, or dead ones.

All of which is a pretty silly state of affairs. The young rebels who like to write novels about the lower East Side with Hasidic overtones did not spring fully armed from the head of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, nor did the supercilious young intellectuals stumble all by themselves on their great tradition of Marx, Freud, and Einstein.

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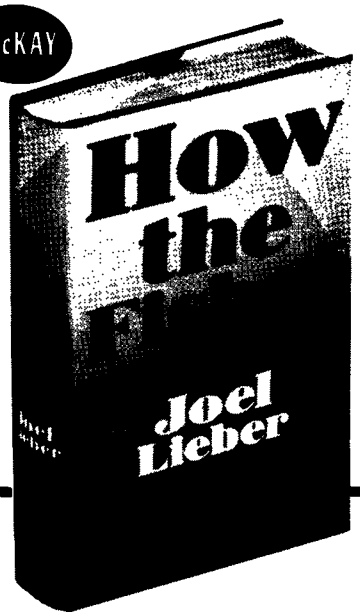

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Most of us—whether literary or advertising men, psychiatrists or tax specialists — follow the common fate, are living out the frustrated dreams of the business generation, just as they have lived out the dreams of the immigrant one. The aspirations link up all the way back to the Emancipation as do the discontents—whether one calls them *"Angst"* or "aggravation" or *"tsores."*

UNDER THESE circumstances, the fiction of Meyer Liben is particularly illuminating. In his modest way, Liben is a kind of Sholem Aleichem of the older, middle-class urban Jews, who expresses the poetry of their interests and sentiments by remaining faithful to the sources of his own development and to the continuity of experience linking the old East Harlem neighborhood, City College, and Greenwich Village; the family life of the generations; the artisan, the businessman, and the writer. Here is one of his typical characters, a distributor of encyclopedias who drives himself hard—"I get a certain pleasure (if not basic) out of buying cheap and selling dear. . . . there's no standing still, you either go ahead or retreat"—but who deeply envies the man in the next office because he makes his living by dreaming up products, is reputed to have invented the yo-yo and the hula hoop.

> Whether he was indeed the creator of these remarkable toys I do not know, but certainly that was the way his mind ran—toward the creation of the absolutely simple, what answers a universal emotional need, that kind of thing that, once on the market, causes people to say: "Absolutely obvious. How come I didn't think of it?" without realizing how hard the perfection is to come by and how hard it is to wed the perfection to the obvious, the universal.

Most of the stories in *Justice Hunger* are told in the first-person, and the narrator-hero is usually the same kind of man, whether he is the graduate student of history in the novella "Justice Hunger," who is trying to keep his head above water in the ideological riptide of the 30's, the officeworker in "A Note on Chivalry" who rescues an elegant girl from a sociologist's jargon, or the tireless go-getter in "Ball of Fire," who rediscovers a sweet vein of lassitude in himself through reading *Oblomov.* Liben's imagination is essentially a reflective one: his heroes are generally designed to express his point of view, to speak with his voice, to stand in his shoes. They are sensible fellows, devoted to the work of the world, to the practical opportunities and responsibilities; but they carry in themselves a hunger for romance, whether of action or thought, that secretly opposes the patterns of their compunctions and repressions and wishes to destroy them.

"Position is everything in life," says the narrator of "Justice Hunger," "that much at least I had learned in the poolrooms." His sense of position, however, is characteristically prey to deeper yearnings, like a pool player who is tempted by the fancy billiard shots. In this case, the narrator is an earnest young liberal who is attracted to a girl who glows with the radical convictions of the 30's, an ex-dancer, a divorcee, a Midwesterner with a Gentile background: in sum, the image of all his desires. He struggles to overcome his temperamental bias for political detachment and objectivity ("I thought of that fine word 'disinterest' and how it was slowly losing its meaning"), his aversion to the temper of the Marxist enclaves, both grandiose and grim (a "loveless cynicism"), as well as his patient sexual timidity ("I should have liked to come closer but did not know how"). The division within between pleasure and realism, passion and prudence, sensitizes his consciousness, makes him a tireless analyst and conversationalist—the verbal flow being his way of bridging the inner split and of connecting to the world, of fighting off "the sense of separation and loss that is forever crowding us." But he remains a man who cannot line himself up for long with the deeper objects of pleasure, for his hunger is basic to his nature, seemingly a state of permanent dissatisfaction that determines his divided view of experience, organizes his sacrifices and compensations, and

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leaves him standing in his own way.

In story after story, Liben describes this situation with unusual subtlety and poignancy. The speaker in "The Locking Gas-Cap," perhaps his best single story, has been engaged for six years to a girl who is hung up on the image of her father, an adventurous civil engineer who died when she was very young, as well as on the possessive strategies of her mother. The couple own a car together, a sort of surrogate home, over which they delight and worry, "the primary cathexes," as he puts it, "having attached themselves to the secondary phenomena." One day she reports that the gas-cap has been stolen for the fourth time. He judiciously suggests a ride in the car to calm her down; she embraces him ardently ("I must say she seemed unusually aroused by the theft of these accessories from our car"). With a show of masculine competence (or is it timid prudence?) he suggests a locking gas-cap, takes her to a garage, goes through the usual small humiliations of such places (though he has been a salesman of automotive parts, knows the owner, and hopes to show off a bit—always competing, as he feels, with the dead father). But with the new cap in place, her passion suddenly turns sour; she worries about the device (suppose she loses the key), then about her mother's latest depression. Always perceptive, always obliging, he dissipates the tension by suggesting they take her mother to the movies with them that night. It is, as he puts it, "a perfectly stable unhappy situation," the two of them cooperating expertly to maintain a common front against the risks of deliverance, getting in just enough desire to keep their inhibitions lubricated, their regressions in working order.

It all sounds more pat than it is; like the symbol of the gas-cap, the story is both immediately expressive and rich in implications. As with much of Liben's fiction, it encloses a psychoanalytic framework within a sensitive grasp of the variations of individual character, the nuances of the living moment. The girl is overly attached to her parents but she is still a complex

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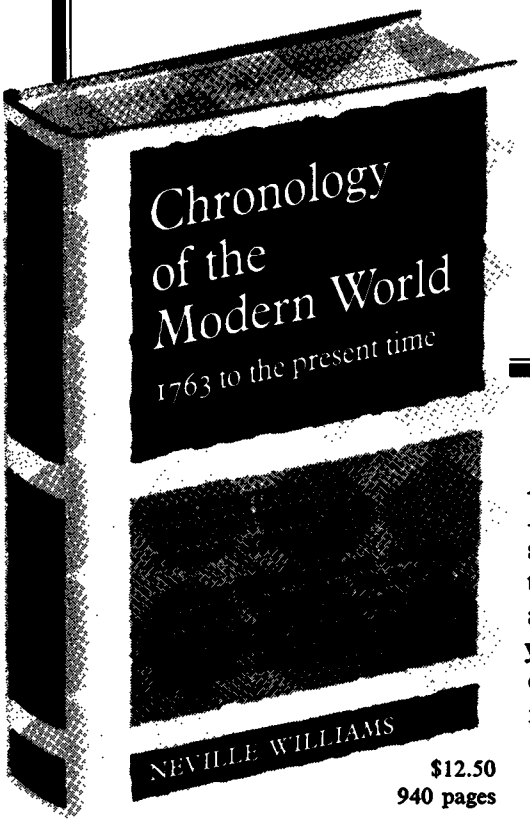

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and desirable girl. The narrator's subservience in the name of "understanding" her keeps him standing on a dime, emotionally speaking, but does not rob him of wit, affection, energy. Liben's heroes may lose out but they are always more than the usual portraits of the *nebbish*, and there is always more at stake than their weakness, their failure. Most of them are, peculiarly enough, bachelors, though tied to their mothers in the standard Jewish way. But the mother of the narrator in "The Office Next Door" is not the standard devouring monster, nor are his feelings toward her cheaply caricatured in the current fashion. He explains his attraction to the inventor's secretary as follows:

> She looked to be the age of my mother at the time that I was twelve or thirteen. It was then, for reasons I never clearly understood (though I now assume it must have been related to some crisis in the family life), that my mother turned toward me with a love, affection, and, yes, need of an extraordinary intensity. I think she realized that this feeling was too powerful for my own good, too powerful for her own good, but she seemed unable to control herself. I was impressed, flattered, as well as confused by this torrent of affection. Never since has a woman loved me the way my mother loved me for that unforgettable year. . . . She went with me to unlikely places, up to Yankee Stadium, for example, to look at those games, about which she could not have been more ignorant, from both a technical and historical view. There she sat at my side, gazing at this complex choreography, occasionally asking questions, less out of desire for knowledge than to make it appear that she was interested, and so, she thought, adding to my pleasure.
>
> In going out with girls, I have always felt uncomfortable in being with those of my own age or younger and have shied away from those older, though it was to these older girls that I was most strongly drawn.

Much of Liben is reflected in this passage, one that suggests the source of the basic hunger that he writes about as well as the emotional quality and range with which he invests it. Thus the themes of exile and loss and frustrated deliverance well up naturally in his fiction; so does a tenderness toward the unfullfilled; a highly developed feeling for the fantasies of desire and guilt; an awareness of the shifting grounds of a relationship, of the buried oceans of feeling that can lie beneath a word or a gesture.

As IN Freud, the discontents of Liben's characters are also embedded in their social drives; in this case those of a generation whose main business in life was to climb the shaky ladder into the middle class. The basic hunger works to keep them going after its goods and values; it underwrites their prowess in business, stimulates their strong political interests ("we [were] all hungrily reaching out to one another, to create a sense of individual value, a sense of communion"), and supports their striving for culture. Liben's characters are, typically, involved in

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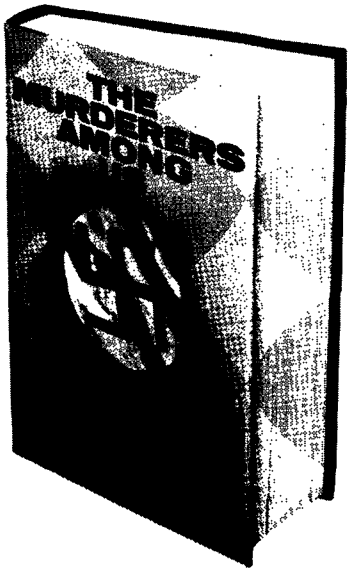

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that great pursuit of what used to be called "refinement" (the courtship in "Justice Hunger" is mainly carried on at lectures, recitals, foreign movies; the hero of "Ball of Fire" sits up a night in a hotel room in St. Louis meditating on *Oblomov*; a secretary in "Solomon's Wisdom" uses the time when her boss is out of the office to write poetry).

What rings most true throughout *Justice Hunger* is a certain wry tone—both commonsensical and cultivated, a quiet blend of irony, curiosity, and patience—which expresses the ethos of the second generation. It is a tone that is beginning to fade into history, though one still hears it, *mutatis mutandis*, in the poetry of Charles Reznikoff or the essays of Milton Himmelfarb. One hopes that in the years remaining to him Meyer Liben will write the novel that captures the temperament and experience of his generation in the same definitive way that Abraham Cahan did for the preceding one in *The Rise of David Levinsky*. But in the meantime there is *Justice Hunger*. It is an uneven collection of his stories, a couple of which bear the marks of his apprenticeship, just as the long title story is allowed to spread out rather thinly in places. But it is a unique, important, and lovely book, one that I especially commend to members of my own generation who are looking for their actual roots.

THE MUSICIAN AS WRITER

VIRGIL THOMSON. BY VIRGIL THOMSON. *Knopf. 424 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL STEINBERG

IT MAKES A delightful book for the most part, and at times a superb one, Virgil Thomson remembering Virgil Thomson and friends—also, at the beginning, some relatives, and now and again a non-friend—in Kansas City, at Harvard, in Paris, New York, and then Paris again.

To Thomson, Thomson is a distinguished and important composer, and there are works that support the claim strongly, notably the two operas with Gertrude Stein texts, and some instrumental pieces as well, like the *Symphony on a Hymn Tune*. Thomson writes with confidence in the merit of his music; for example: "Among my works composed after 1945, those which touch me most are the Cello Concerto . . .; the Flute Concerto . . .; the *Missa Pro Defunctis* . . . which exploits my skills in choral treatment and liturgical evocation; and *The Feast of Love* . . ., my own translation from late Latin of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, sex poem of all time. My other works I know will make their way; these also perhaps. But they worry me because I love them." Other composers have written of loving certain of their works, but who else has been touched by his own?

Thomson's public reputation, though, rests on his way with words. It began with the occasional articles sent from Paris to *Modern Music*; was increased with the 1939 book, *The State of Music* ("I like it better than your book," he wrote at the time to Aaron Copland); and was established thoroughly with his writing for the New York *Herald Tribune* from 1940 to 1954. Beginning one fall day with a swift and clean murder of the Philharmonic, Barbirolli, and Sibelius, he kept the New York musical world delighted and infuriated with his brilliant writing, openly partisan points of view, and with some remarkable perceptions. He got bored eventually, the judgment became more and more perverse, and there was a growing tendency for him to write about whatever was on his mind at the time rather than about what he had actually heard, but he was interesting, and the writing itself was a joy of a sort that newspaper reading rarely affords us.

Virgil Thomson, too, is written with characteristic elegance and grace. There is much wit, though less malice than one might have expected. With 424 pages of text, *Virgil Thomson* is an ample book. Some of it is stuffing, mainly in the form of Parisian name-dropping. Not all the friends and acquaintances come to life in these pages, and a certain sense of clutter is produced by the attempt to involve the reader in a society of lit-

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tle concern to those who were not part of it.

THE MOST beautiful achievement here is the already celebrated "Portrait of Gertrude Stein," which begins: "Gertrude Stein in her younger days had liked to write all night and sleep all day. She also, it seems, ate copiously, drank wine, and smoked cigars. By the time I knew her, at fifty-two, she ate abstemiously; she neither drank nor smoked; and she was likely to wake, as people do in middle life, by nine. Her volume had been diminished too. Her appearance, nevertheless, on account of low stature (five feet, two), remained monumental, like that of some saint or sybil sculptured three-fourths life size. Her working powers also were intact, remained so, indeed, until her death at seventy-two."

The Stein portrait really runs through much of the book, and it is especially concentrated in the chapter called "Orchestrations and Contracts," which describes preparations for the premiere of *Four Saints in Three Acts*. There is a steady rhythm of quarrels and reconciliations in the Stein-Thomson friendship, often about money. Here, for instance, Stein insisted on a 50-50 sharing of profits: "It is quite true that upon you falls the burden of seeing the production through but on the other hand, the commercial value of my name is very considerable and therefore we will keep it 50-50." Thomson replied, "I should like to protest that although your name has a very great publicity value as representing the highest quality of artistic achievement, its purely commercial value, especially in connection with a work as hermetic in style as the *Four Saints*, is somewhat less, as I have found out in seeking a publisher for our various joint works. . . . Moreover, it is not the value of your name or the devotion of your admirers (I except Mrs. Chadbourne, who began very practically indeed but didn't continue very long) that is getting this opera produced, but my friends and admirers." Stein, full of the success of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*—this was in 1933—wrote back, "My dear Virgil, Yes yes yes, but nous avons changé tout cela," and, indeed, the final agreement was 50-50.

It was Stein's essential lyricism that seems to have appealed to Thomson, and he sees her as an artist distinct from Picasso, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Joyce, for whom "obscurity, long the hallmark of modernism, remained a trademark." The chapters, "Communists all Around and High Life Too" and "The New Romanticism," give clear expositions of Thomson's anti-obscure, anti-neoclassical, aesthetic stand. The attitude is formulated in the account of a conversation with the then very young Pierre Boulez: "By using carefully thought out and complex ways, you produce by thirty a handful of unforgettable works. But by then you are the prisoner of your method, which is stiff. You cannot handle it with freedom; so you write less and less; at forty you are sterile. This is the trap of all style-bound artists. For without freedom no one is a mas-

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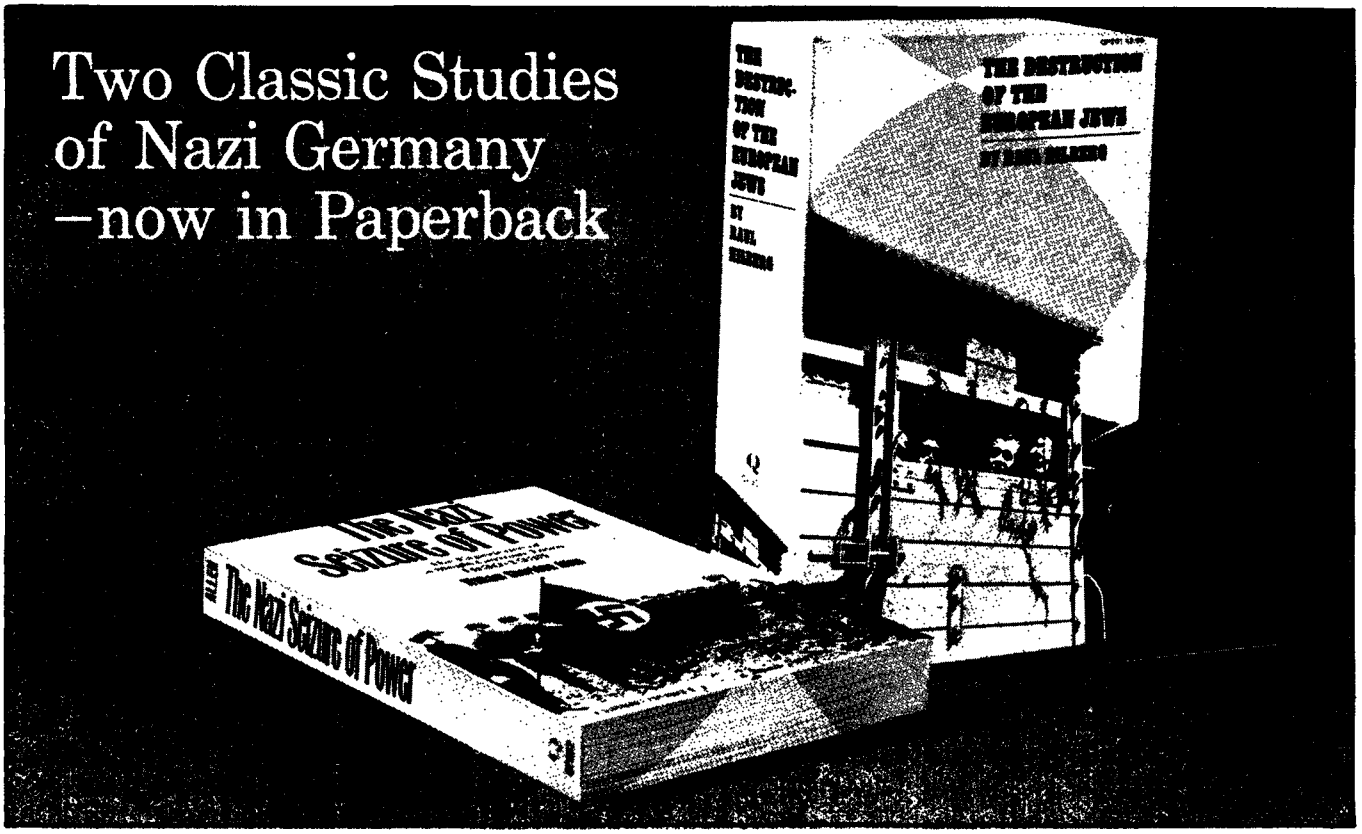

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ter." Thomson reports that Boulez sadly said *"Bien sur"* and changed the subject. For Thomson, Boulez is, like Bérard and Duchamp, an artist who has evaded the implications and promise of a brilliant youth.

What Thomson says may be true of Boulez, but what, for example, of Webern? There is little use, at any rate, in looking to Thomson for illumination on the work of his contemporaries—the bias is too strong. But then the bias is the price we pay for the liveliness of mind that produced the vivid evocations of turn-of-the-century Kansas City (with its delightful concern for the differences between Missouri and Kansas), the family portraits, and all the good professional gossip. *Virgil Thomson* is an intelligent, vital, and at times touching, book.

MYSTICAL HUMANISM

YOU SHALL BE AS GODS: A RADICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ITS TRADITION. By ERICH FROMM. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 240 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by ERICH ISAAC

IN THIS BOOK, Erich Fromm seeks to support his particular *Weltanschauung*—that of atheistic (or nontheistic) mystical humanism—by articulating its roots in the Hebrew Bible and the subsequent Jewish tradition. He attempts to show how the concept of God evolved from that of a clannish authoritarian deity (the God of Eden), to a progressively limited constitutional monarch (the covenant-making God), to the nameless God who reveals himself to Moses ("I am Who I am"), to the God of Maimonides (without attributes of essence). At this point, Fromm believes, the stage is set for "atheism," for the next step would be to eliminate the concept "God" altogether, except perhaps as a "poetical symbol of *x*." That *x* is a projection of the primary and mystical ego-transcending experience of man in which he sees himself as an "open system" rather than a fixed entity.

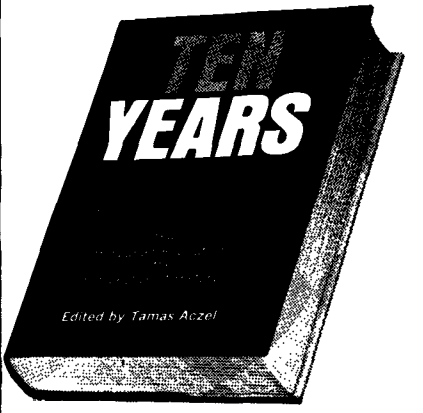
So much for mysticism. As for humanism, Fromm finds evidence for it in the paucity of biblical theology, in the negative theology of the rabbis, and in the emphatic Jewish insistence on man's freedom of moral action. He retells the talmudic story of Rabbi Eliezer, who called for miracles to prove him right in a dispute against the majority of his fellow rabbis. After a whole series of such miracles failed to shake his adversaries from their position, Rabbi Eliezer cried:

> "If the *Halakhah* agrees with me, let it be proved from Heaven!" Thereupon a heavenly voice cried out: "Why do you dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the *Halakhah* agrees with him!" But R. Joshua arose and exclaimed: "It is not in heaven!" What did he mean by this? R. Jeremiah said: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a heavenly voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai that after the majority must one incline.

As further proof of his thesis, Fromm points to the genre of Hasidic tales in which God is actually called to account by man, sometimes in a formal juridical procedure. He also argues that the Bible is more concerned with the fight against idolatry than with theology, and he interprets idolatry as the worship of a partial self—intelligence, strength, etc.—in the idol. The Bible and Jewish tradition are then humanistic because they conceive of man as finally capable of complete freedom from such false worship and because they make the whole man the measure of all things.

IT IS difficult to criticize all this, since what Fromm ultimately does is to claim that the mystical experience which others have had of God is the same mystical experience which he has had of "man the open system" and that his own interpretation of that experience is the correct one. He does not, however, want to argue with those who think they see God in their visions; instead, he chooses to emphasize what he has in common with them. Now, it is always a formidable task to deal with someone's interpretation of his own experience or to take exception to it.

The Hungarian Revolution in the perspective of history



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Nor can one find much fault with Fromm's use of Jewish tradition to support his case, since the current of which he speaks really does exist, and since he is careful to point out that it is by no means the only current.

FROMM'S INTERPRETATION of that tradition, however, is open to question. He sees only man and thinks that the Jewish tradition, too, saw —or progressively grew to see—only man; the proof being that the concept of God comes to be treated as unthinkable, "hidden," "the silent," "the Nothing." Why, then, have God at all? Fromm explains that God was not abolished by Judaism because a religion with God as its central idea could not afford to abandon that concept; he says, however, that Judaism did outgrow it. But to argue, as Fromm does, that the mystics' reference to "the Nothing" means that nothing exists outside themselves, that there is no reality corresponding to their experience, is scarcely to make a logical deduction, unless one begins with the premise that "There is nothing outside the self."

It is a misconception to assume that negative theology intends to describe the divine; rather, it seeks to avoid a rational determination of God before the essence of the divine is experienced. Rudolf Otto, in *The Idea of the Holy*, has put it very well:

> "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." . . . It is instructive that in such phrases as these, in which consciousness would fain put its highest consummation into words, "all images fall away" and the mind turns from them to grasp expressions that are purely negative. And it is still more instructive that in reading and hearing such words their merely negative character simply is not noticed; that we can let whole chains of such negations enrapture, even intoxicate us. . . . All this teaches us the independence of the positive content of the experience from the implications of its overt conceptual expression. . . .

Moreover, Max Scheler—anticipating just such misconceptions as Fromm's—has pointed out that if negative theology is misunderstood as a rational theory, it necessarily leads to religious nihilism, "yes, indeed, into atheism."

Though he misunderstands mysticism, Fromm is well advised to seek a firm foundation for his radical humanism. In attempting to anchor his vision in transcendence, he shows implicit awareness of the fact that past attempts to make "mankind" the object of the devotion and love formerly reserved for God have usually been followed by the destruction of individuality and freedom. The line leads from Rousseau to Robespierre and Marat, and from there to some 20th-century butchers who raged in the name of humanity. The concept of "humanity" is not simply an empirical one, and when it is falsely interpreted as such there results an attempt to wipe out the objective differences between peo-

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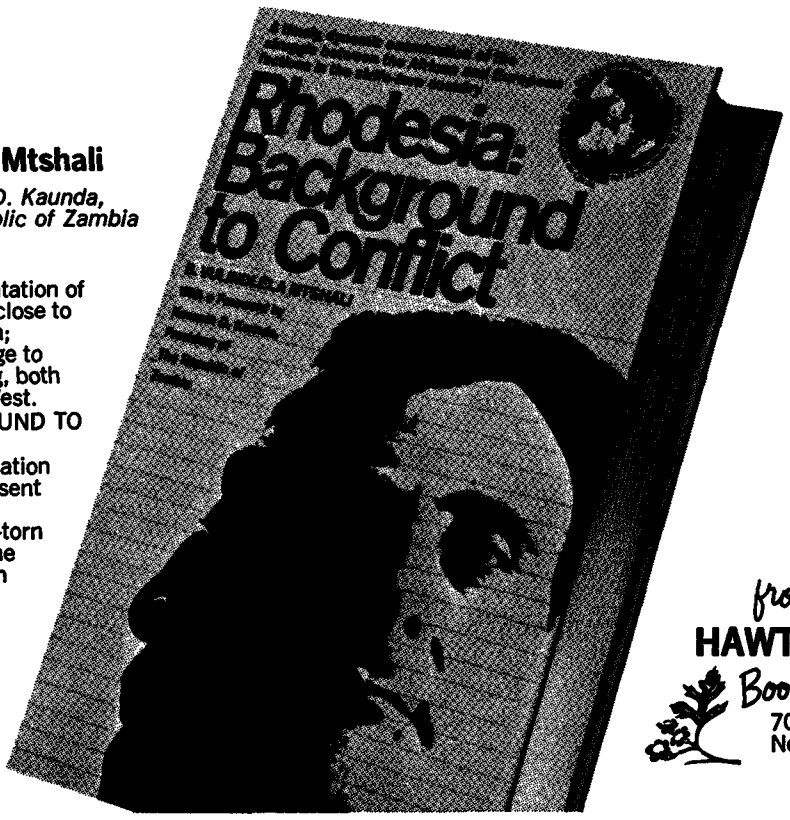

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ple and to negate the individual's value. Thence derives, as has often been shown, the dangerous tendency to pit the numerically greater objects of love against the numerically smaller: mankind against country, nation against tribe, tribe against family, family against person. The goal becomes, to use Bentham's famous formulation, "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." It may be precisely to counteract these dangers that Judaism—though it is certainly sensitive to the claims of humanity—emphasizes the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

SINCE FROMM is committed to atheism, however, he cannot accept that commandment. What, then, is the foundation for ethics, and what is the *"Halakhah"* that is to be followed? Fromm notes that the Jewish *Halakhah* is a mixture of irrational laws and of precepts conducive to the highest development of man. He cannot accept the whole, nor does he believe that the *Halakhah* could stay alive "if the two parts were torn asunder." But the ego-transcending experience of which Fromm speaks is a poor ground on which to build his own ethics, for there is no guarantee that it will lead man to build a "messianic" society. Fromm compares the experience of ego-transcendence to the experience of what Tillich calls the "ground of being," but he seems to forget that the same expression was used by Schopenhauer to describe the experience of a terrible, demonic, blind will. Schopenhauer's conclusions and those of Nietzsche, based on a similar metaphysical concept, would certainly not appeal to Fromm. The former ran away from the experience and the latter abandoned himself to it, but in neither case were the results happy. Perhaps the lesson to be drawn from the story of the rabbis who would not trust the miracles called down by Rabbi Eliezer is not the one Fromm draws—of man's freedom from God—but rather that human experience alone cannot be trusted to point the way which humans must follow.

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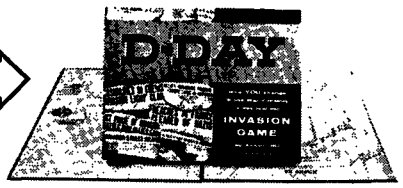

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THE CRYSTAL SPIRIT. A STUDY OF GEORGE ORWELL. By GEORGE WOODCOCK. *Little, Brown. 366 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH EPSTEIN

WITH 1984 only seventeen years away, it would appear that George Orwell's reputation has at least as much chance of surviving as we do. It is not as a prophet, however, that Orwell's name is likely to endure, nor as a novelist, nor a journalist, nor even as an essayist, though in this last form he wrote perhaps as well as anyone who has used the English language in the last fifty years. It is for qualities of person and intellect that he is likely to be remembered—qualities which shine through his writing and at times even transcend it. Orwell is not the only writer in this category; Santayana, with his enormously attractive refinement and intellectual subtlety, belongs to it, and so does the late Isaac Rosenfeld. Having died in his mid-thirties, Rosenfeld never got around to writing anything which might lay claim to being a major work, but everything he did write bears the indelible mark of his own special warmth and humanity. Fittingly enough, it was Rosenfeld who remarked of Orwell, shortly after the latter's death in 1950: "When he died, I felt as many of his readers who never knew him must have done, that this was a friend gone."

The 30's and 40's, a period when politics were preeminent, stamped most men who lived through them as either knaves or fools, but Orwell emerged from these decades not only with his dignity intact but also as the most honorable political writer of his time. He was able to do so, it would seem, because more than anyone else whose record we have of those years, he most consistently struggled to reconcile his feelings with his politics. In Orwell's case, this was no mean task, for though a radical in politics, he was in many respects a conservative in feeling. Like Justice Holmes, Orwell might best have styled himself an "anarcho-conservative." It

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is one of the ironies of the time that Orwell, the man who has frequently been called the political conscience of his age, conducted a long flirtation with anarchism, a form of anti-politics which at its root implies a supreme loathing for the political life. "As I write," he began an essay of 1941, "highly civilized human beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me."

The turns and twists of Orwell's career, along with its long stretches of coherence, have now been mapped out with a clarity close to Orwell's own by George Woodcock in *The Crystal Spirit*. (The title is taken from a phrase in one of Orwell's poems: "No bomb that ever burst/Shatters the crystal spirit.") Although a book of considerable distinction, *The Crystal Spirit* can scarcely be called a model study of a man's life, if only because Mr. Woodcock has respected Orwell's expressed wish that no official biography of him be written. Could his prescience, one wonders, have extended even to foreknowledge of the dominant form literary biography would take after his death—namely, an elaborately psychoanalytic grubbing for neuroses? In any case, three of the four sections of *The Crystal Spirit* deal almost exclusively with Orwell's writing—though the initial section, "The Man Remembered," which represents Mr. Woodcock's personal reminiscence of Orwell, is by far the most interesting part of the book.

IF THE OTHER parts are less fascinating, it is not because Mr. Woodcock is not a perceptive critic, but because Orwell's writing stands in need of very little explication. Its meaning is unmistakable, and intentionally so. For the sake of clarity, Orwell deliberately eschewed irony, ambiguity, and the other components of modern literary construction. As for those tensions and conflicts that existed between himself and what he wrote about, Orwell was generally the first to spot them. Not only did he bring them to the surface of his writing, but frequently they constituted his very subject matter, as can be seen in almost everything he wrote about working-class life and his own relation to British

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imperialism. While Orwell's fiction allows for more critical interpretation than his essays, and Mr. Woodcock's comments on the novels all seem quite sound, almost all of them were less than first-rate. As a critical subject, then, Orwell provides meager opportunities to be the life of the party at meetings of the Modern Language Association.

Mr. Woodcock, however, has no such aspirations; appropriately, therefore, he concentrates on Orwell's development as a writer and on putting his work into the contexts—intellectual, political, social—in which it was done. This he is supremely well-equipped to do. As a poet and an anarchist living in London, Woodcock himself was very much caught up in the same atmosphere as Orwell. In fact, his first contact with Orwell was by way of a heated polemic in the pages of *Partisan Review*. Afterward, Orwell wrote to Woodcock: "I am afraid I answered rather roughly in the *Partisan Review* controversy. I always do when I am attacked—however, no malice either side, I hope." Orwell seems to have been constitutionally unable to hate anyone, except in the abstract. For precisely this reason, he deliberately avoided mixing in London literary circles. He used to attack Stephen Spender vigorously in print, but after meeting him face-to-face, he could not resist writing to him: "Even if when I met you, I had not happened to like you, I should still have been bound to change my attitude, because when you meet anyone in the flesh you realize immediately that he is a human being and not a sort of caricature embodying certain ideas." Orwell's feelings, in other words, were not in the service of his politics.

This did not, of course, diminish his political commitments. "I have no particular love for the idealized 'worker,' as he appears in the bourgeois Communist's mind," he wrote in *Homage to Catalonia*, "but when I see an actual flesh-and-blood worker in conflict with his natural enemy, the policeman, I do not have to ask myself which side I am on." No one despised the totalitarian cast of mind more than Orwell, but he despised

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equally any breach of libertarian standards in the fight against totalitarianism. In 1948, when the British Labour party attempted a purge of Communists from the civil service, using methods which did not allow suspects to confront their accusers, Orwell joined Mr. Woodcock, Sir Herbert Read, and others in opposing the effort—an act which stands in notable distinction to the conduct of certain American anti-Communist intellectuals in regard to our own Smith Act and the bawdry of the late Senator McCarthy. The difference, one is tempted to essay, is that Orwell's anti-Communism derived from a hatred of injustice, while that of his American counterparts derived merely from a hatred of Communists. Orwell's primary concern was never with vengeance, but truth. He was well aware, as Mr. Woodcock points out, that he would deface the classic composition of *Homage to Catalonia* if he followed his inclination to devote a chapter to the ephemeral political infighting which resulted in the Communist betrayal and frame-up of the P.O.U.M. Yet he went ahead and included just such a chapter. In that very act, political honesty is defined.

IN WRITING about Orwell, it is impossible to avoid recourse to words like "honesty" and "truth"; as Lionel Trilling was the first to point out, Orwell demands to be described in old-fashioned terms like "virtue." It is almost as if he came from a different moral universe than the one we now live in. "Image," "credibility gap," "escalation"—these are the words of today's moral universe. Orwell of course knew all about the brutalization of language and what it implied about the brutalizers. Were he alive today, he would surely insist that "image" means the thing which is not really there; that "credibility gap" means that the gentleman in the White House is probably lying again; and that "escalation" simply means increased killing, no more and no less.

Orwell had, in his own phrase, "a power of facing unpleasant facts." Unlike Camus, a writer to whom he is very much akin in temperament, he was not a systematic thinker. He reasoned from his experience and trusted his instincts; his cast of mind, though angry and often gloomy, was far from being pessimistic. "All revolutions," he believed, "are failures, but they are not all the same failure." The target of *1984*, as Mr. Woodcock points out in his book, was not merely totalitarianism but the deadly illusion of perfectionism. "The essence of being human," Orwell wrote in his essay on Gandhi, "is that one does not seek perfection, that one *is* sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human individuals."

Toward the end of his life, Mr. Woodcock tells us, Orwell planned to write novels on the model of Joseph Conrad's. He hoped to give up all his polemical writing, to have done with politics. But it evidently wasn't in him. Instead, on his deathbed, and with considerable haste, he completed the manuscript of *1984*. Such was his sense of duty—in the end he himself was prepared to be "defeated and broken up by life."

MOTIVE FOR MURDER

ON INIQUITY: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ARISING OUT OF THE MOORS MURDER TRIAL. By PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON. *Scribners. 142 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by MARY ELLMANN

IN THE spring of 1966, Pamela Hansford Johnson was sent to Chester to report for the London *Sunday Telegraph* on the Moors murder trial. Ian Brady, twenty-seven, and Myra Hindley, twenty-three, were accused of the murder of three persons, a boy of twelve, a girl of ten, and a second of seventeen. Both were found guilty.

Writers always search now for innovation in such a case, in a double dread of its being not only criminal but commonplace. What distinguished the conduct of Ian Brady

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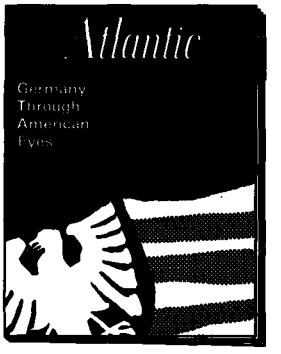

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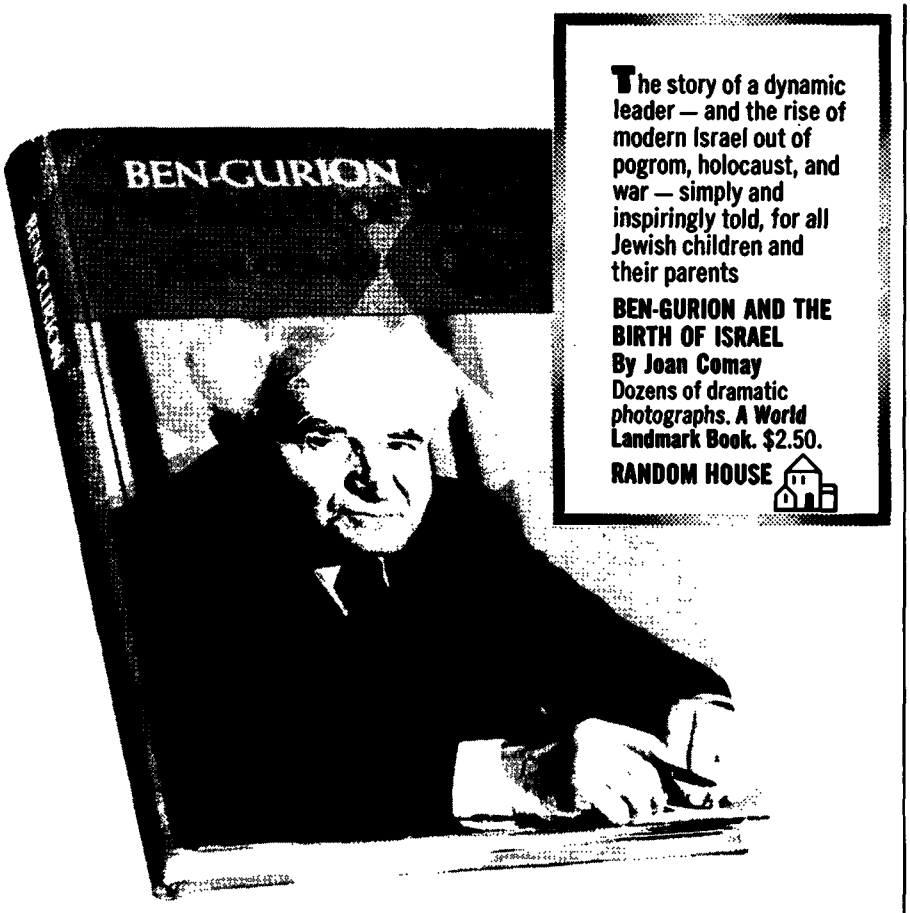
and Myra Hindley was their eccentric juxtaposition of circumstances: they resorted, like figures in a McLuhan nightmare, to an extraordinary jumble of media. The finales were Conan Doyle reproductions—all axes and howling dogs and cloddy graves on the moors. The preliminary devices, however, were recent and even modish. Brady had a library of fifty books: among the ten-cent erotica, the one reputable-disreputable was of course the Marquis de Sade. The jury studied a checklist of this collection; it also looked at Brady's snapshots of the girl, Lesley Ann Downey, and listened to a sixteen-minute tape recording, furnished by Brady too, of her responses to torture. Only a limited budget, evidently, ruled out a 16-mm. movie of the murder. Neither the camera work nor the tape recording, however, impressed Miss Johnson so much as Brady's *books*: they were, in the end, to blame for her writing *On Iniquity*.

The book is not, except at the start, a description of the trial, and this restraint is merciful. It is not crime but criminal impressionism which is banal, and even its short exercise here is onerous. We are informed of the predictable weather —"A light drizzle was falling now, bats were flitting in the russet-coloured dusk"—of the Roman wall about the city, of the portrait of Charles II in the courtroom, and the bouffant hairdo of Myra Hindley. There is also an evening walk, in the course of which Miss Johnson surprises two homosexuals in a private embrace and is herself annoyed by a nasty old boy who follows her back to her hotel.

I mention these regrettable incidents because they provide the first demonstration in the book of an intellectual penchant: Miss Johnson is inclined to *connect* these incidents and the Moors trial in Chester, they indicate to her "the unrest, the fever, in the air." Naturally, both incidents might occur on the Spanish Steps at the same time that, just across the Tiber, the Pope considered the canonization of Albert Schweitzer. It would then, presumably, be difficult to deduce a general fever or unrest in Rome? It is possible for facts, like ants and bees, to coexist without relationship.



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Most of this book, though, is not concerned with the condition of Chester. Having completed her assignment there, Miss Johnson still felt "nagged" by the case, and this later concern resulted in her new series of reflections upon it. These have, in general, an insomniac quality—a symptomatic looseness, disorder, and redundancy, a nightish blurring of sense by sensibility. Hot feelings lie like blankets on truisms; portents are attached, incomprehensibly, to shadows of meaning. *Chester deserved a better fate. / I ask again: what is the price we are prepared to pay? / We need not, of course, make false apologies: murder is always wicked.* Metaphor too is overwrought and reiterative, a tossing and turning among carts-before-horses and what-on-earths and minds boggling, boggling.

Still, individual terms of judgment are determinedly shadowless. The titular *iniquity,* a Baconian flourish, is followed by all its cousins—*wicked, hideous, monstrous, depraved, wretched, dirty,* and *mean.* Miss Johnson is exasperated by our habitual substitution of *sick* people for *bad* people, and *modern* art for *sordid* art. Her ethical vocabulary is bluff and countrified: it expresses her chapped suspicion of continental, and particularly Viennese, subtleties of psychology. Too much emphasis, for example, has been put upon the criminal effects of environment; Miss Johnson proposes, obscurely, the alternative study of a "genetic factor." I am myself particularly taken with the chapter called "The Question of Madness," which offers "some ideas of my own." In this chapter, the murderess Ruth Ellis was mad but the murderer Christopher Craig was not. George Joseph Smith was certainly mad, but Madeleine Smith (no relation) was perhaps only "driven" mad. It is all rather like Counting Nuts, a method devised by Agatha Christie of falling asleep. Criminal madness is also divided into four parts: these four prove to be arithmetical categories of murder instead, based upon the variable numbers of people killing or killed.

BUT THESE *aperçus,* like those on penal reform (Chapter 9 summarizes Captain Alexander Maconochie's enlightened government of Norfolk Island, a penal colony, in the 1840's), are excursions from the business of the book, which arises out of the deplorable Brady's library and which urges the increased censorship of books. The ruminations on this subject are two types, the controlled and the inflamed. Shifts between the two are not signaled, but once in one the reader knows he is not in the other. The controlled rumination is, if not illuminating, unexceptional. It asks repeatedly a single question: Did reading *The Kiss of the Whip* make Ian Brady whip Lesley Ann Downey? Or, shouldn't we try to determine the unknown relationship between the representation and the commission of violence?

The familiar question floats, like a pea in a stew, in a mass of inflamed ruminations. The question itself consumes its answer (Yes! Yes!), as *The Kiss of the Whip* seems gradually to envelop much of the writing in which most educated people have been most interested in this century. As in that walk about Ches-

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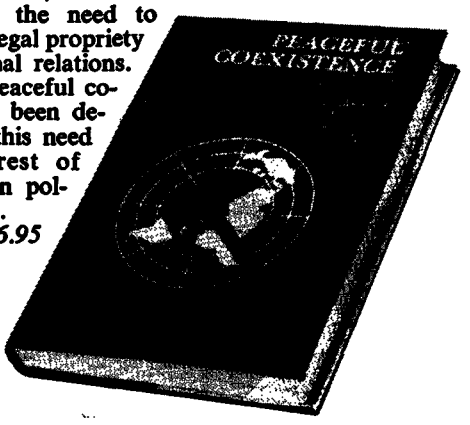

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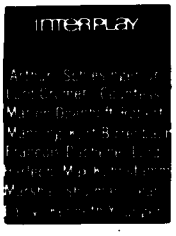

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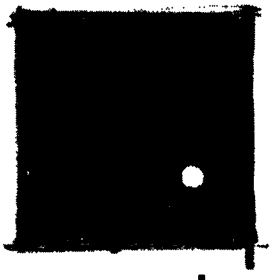

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ter, in this argument phenomena are not simultaneous or coincident, they are sequential and causative. Because of Ian Brady's crimes in 1964 and 1965, two homosexuals kiss in 1966. Because of Ian Brady's crimes, we probably should not freely distribute novels, plays, and movies which lack Tolstoy's explicit moral purpose. Because of the "permissive" decision in the English *Lady Chatterley* case, American four-letter novels appeared. Because of Hitler's importing pornography into Poland, the capacity of the Poles for social resistance was impaired. (Miss Johnson shares with George Steiner, whom she admires, the impulse to employ that intricate iniquity, Nazism, as a blunt critical instrument.) Ambivalent factors slide into certain causes, causes slide into other causes: if we do not freely distribute poisons and drugs, should we freely distribute books? Queries in turn slide into diatribes. Those who oppose censorship are *vain* and *intellectually lazy, Apostles of Freedom* and devotees of *Instant Fashion.* If we few become like them, we will all of us end up *moral eunuchs* and *brainless cowards.*

But whatever prompted Ian Brady to kill or Henry Miller to write, will not be explained by Miss Johnson. The one requires a psychological, and the other an aesthetic acumen which she will not waste on iniquity. For both, she substitutes a brusque social pragmatism. To oppose the censorship of books is not only wrong but inutile. "Emerging" societies find such restraints essential to the achievement of major and material causes like industrialization. "Static" societies, resting on their previous achievements, lack major causes and in their boredom take up minor and immaterial causes like the freedom of the arts. They might better alleviate starvation in societies less comfortable than their own. At the least, they might consider at home the social danger of the semi-literate in all audiences of the arts.

The semi-literate are a modern risk: in the past people were more safely divided between the literate and the illiterate. Though education has changed the illiterate into the semi-literate, it is impractical to hope that further education may

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change the semi-literate into the literate. And as they are, the semi-literate read badly: the fantasies and the introspections which some books provoke in them are not invigorating, and the *actions* which these books *may* provoke in them are terrifying. To save them from masturbation and from murder, we should consider saving them from these books. The message: Feed them, and support your local police.

A Note: Years ago, when I was young and semi-literate (ah, those days!), I got hold of Miss Johnson's novel, *The Unspeakable Skipton*, and very much enjoyed the Night-town scene in a Belgian brothel. As I remember, the employees did a mime (I think it was a mime) of copulation between Leda and Zeus the Swan, and then Leda was obliged to sit interminably, buffing her nails, on two enormous eggs stamped CASTOR and POLLUX. I laughed out loud at a bus stop over that, and in gratitude I am ready at any time, health permitting, to protest the removal of *The Unspeakable Skipton* from our railway bookstalls.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

THEODORE SOLOTAROFF *is currently editor of* New American Review, *a journal of new writing the first issue of which will appear in September.*

MICHAEL STEINBERG, *here making his first appearance in* COMMENTARY, *is the music critic of the Boston* Globe.

ERICH ISAAC, *a frequent contributor, is an expert on the geography of religion. Mr. Isaac teaches at the City University of New York.*

JOSEPH EPSTEIN *is an editor of the* Encyclopaedia Britannica *and frequently reviews books in these pages.*

MARY ELLMANN *contributed "The Dutiful Simone de Beauvoir" to our August 1965 issue.*

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